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MASTER OF ORLEANS
Priyanshu wins his first Super 300 title
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Telecom authorities block 120 sender IDs for bulk messaging over China link

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Telecom authorities have blocked as many as 120 headers operated by a group linked to a Chinese entity in the past two months based on information provided by the Union Home Ministry.

A header, also known as sender ID, is a unique combination of characters or numbers representing the brand or company name of the message sender. Headers are used by banks, marketing companies, utility providers and even government offices to send bulk messages (SMS) to consumers and customers.

An investigation by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) under the Ministry found that the headers were hosted from China.

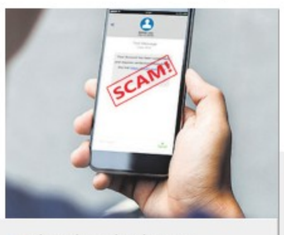
Citing an example, a Ministry official said the header of West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd. – WBSEDC – was compromised and taken over by a Chinese host. The header was misused to dupe consumers who received messages pertaining to outstanding electricity bills.

"The SMS contained malicious links, which when clicked would lead to financial loss for the consumer as the hacker would get access to the person's phone. Consumers would fall for it as the header genuinely belongs to the electricity distribution company," the official said.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

Cheat code

Centre has blocked multiple headers for malicious messaging



- A header, also known as **sender ID**, is a unique combination of characters or numbers representing the brand or company name of the message sender
- Headers are used by banks, marketing companies, utility providers and even government offices to send **bulk messages** (SMS) to consumers and customers
- The header of West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd. – WBSEDC - was compromised and taken over by a Chinese host
- The header was misused to dupe consumers who received messages pertaining to outstanding electricity bills

India's tiger population tops 3,000, shows census

The population has grown the most in the Shivalik hills and Gangetic flood plains, but there is a decline in the Western Ghats numbers, though 'major populations' are said to be stable

Jacob P. Koshy
NEW DELHI

India has at least 3,167 tigers, according to estimates from the latest tiger census made public on Sunday. While this is ostensibly an increase since the census of 2018, the numbers are not strictly comparable, as a key calculation to compute the maximum and minimum range of the tiger population is yet to be done.

There were 2,967 tigers recorded in 2018, and 2,226 in 2014. Sunday's figures were provisional and could be revised, an official involved with the census told *The Hindu*.

The tiger population numbers were made public by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Mysuru on Sunday, at an event to mark the International Big Cat Alliance conference and the 50th anniversary of Project Tiger.

Western Ghats decline

The tiger population has grown the most in the Shivalik hills and the Gangetic flood plains, followed by central India, the northeastern hills, the Brahmaputra flood plains, and the Sundarbans. There was a decline in the Western Ghats numbers, though "major populations" were said to be stable.

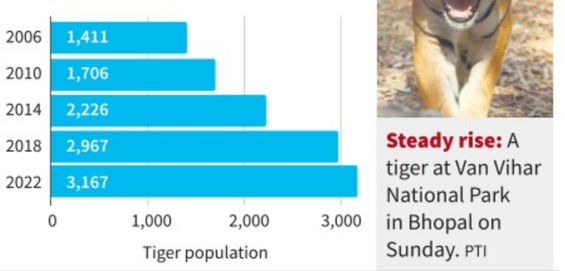
The tiger numbers are estimated by adding animals caught in camera traps, and those that may not have been captured in this way. The latter are estimated by statistical techniques. "We have found 3,080 unique tigers in camera traps this time. In the last census, it was 2,603. However, for the latest census, we have not finished computing the estimates of tigers outside such traps as well as the State-wise break-up of tigers, so the numbers may differ. We expect it to be done within three months," said Qamar Qureshi of the Wildlife Institute of India, one of the scientists involved in the census exercise.

In their four-year estimates, the scientists provide a range of the estimated tiger population, and the mean value is highlighted as the latest tiger population.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

Big cat count

According to the data released by the PM, the number of tigers in India increased by 200 in the past four years. A look at the tiger population



Steady rise: A tiger at Van Vihar National Park in Bhopal on Sunday. PTI

NEARBY

B.N. Chandrappa is new KPCC working chief

BENGALURU
The Congress on Sunday appointed B.N. Chandrappa, former MP, as KPCC working president in place of former MP R. Dhruvanarayan, who passed away recently. » Page 4

Two railway stations to be revamped

BENGALURU
South Western Railway (SWR) is all set to revamp two railway stations — Krishnarajpuram and Whitefield — for the benefit of commuters
» Page 2

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 5

Mountain path

All-weather connectivity: Work on in full swing inside Zojila tunnel, said to be Asia's longest bi-directional tunnel, in the Sonmarg area of Ganderbal on Sunday. The tunnel, through the Zojila Pass at an altitude of 11,575 feet on the Srinagar-Leh highway, is expected to cut travel time between the Kashmir Valley and Ladakh to just 40 minutes from the current four hours. NISSAR AHMAD

Two months after Dalit student was found dead at IIT-Bombay, police arrest his batchmate

Abhinay Deshpande
Abhinay Lakshman
MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

The Special Investigation Team of the Mumbai Police on Sunday said it has arrested a batchmate of IIT-Bombay student Darshan Solanki for alleged abetment of suicide.

Solanki, 18, a first-year student in the B.Tech. (Chemical) programme, ended his life by jumping off the seventh floor of a hostel building on February 12.

His family suspected foul play in his death, and alleged that Solanki faced discrimination at the institute for belonging to a Scheduled Caste (SC).

The accused, identified as Armaan Iqbal Khatri, was detained by the police days after they found a note purportedly left behind by Solanki blaming the former for him taking the extreme step, the police said.

"Armaan has killed me," read the note, which was found in Solanki's hostel room. Following this, the police registered a case under Section 306 (abetment of suicide) of the Indian Penal Code and relevant Sections of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

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BJP list either today or tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After two days of parleys on party candidates in the Assembly election, the BJP's Central Election Committee met in New Delhi on Sunday and almost finalised the first list of candidates, which is likely to be announced either on Monday or on Tuesday.

DETAILS » PAGE 5

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India to bridge language gap with neighbours

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

Looking to expand its cultural footprint in nations with which it has historical ties, including those in its immediate neighbourhood, India is planning to create a pool of experts in languages spoken in countries such as Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan and Indonesia to facilitate better people-to-people exchanges.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has envisaged a special project called 'The Language Friendship Bridge', which plans to train five to 10 people in the official languages of each of these countries.

As of now, the ICCR has zeroed in on 10 languages: Kazakh, Uzbek, Bhutanese, Ghoti (spoken in Tibet), Burmese, Khmer (spoken in Cambodia), Thai, Sinhalese and Bahasa (spoken in both Indonesia and Malaysia).

'Shared heritage'

"Considering our cultural imprints in these countries, India cannot afford to ignore these countries," ICCR President Vinay Sahasrabuddhe told *The Hindu*.

In India, the focus till now has been on learning European languages such as Spanish, French and German, along with the languages of major Asian economies such as China and Japan. Though a number of universities and institutes offer courses in these languages, only a handful teach any of the 10 languages on the ICCR list. Sinhala, for example, is taught at Banaras Hindu University and the School of Foreign Languages (SFL) under the Ministry of Defence. The SFL also has courses in Bahasa, Burmese and Tibetan.

> Considering our cultural imprints in these countries, India cannot afford to ignore these countries
>
> **VINAY SAHASRABUDDHE**
> ICCR president

"India requires translators, interpreters and teachers in the languages of these countries with which it shares a cultural history," Dr. Sahasrabuddhe said. The idea is to enable India to translate its epics and classics, as well as contemporary literature, into these languages so that people can read them.

Varsity consultations

The ICCR is in discussion with universities and institutes as well as experts offering foreign language courses in the country on the modalities of implementing the project. Among those being consulted are the foreign language departments at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University, Hyderabad's English and Foreign Languages University, Banaras Hindu University, and Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwa Vidyalaya at Wardha.

The discussions, sources said, have thrown up two possibilities. One is to start tie-ups wherein teachers from these countries come and teach courses in India. The second approach is the ICCR offering scholarships to Indian students to go and study these languages in the countries where they are spoken.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

FPIs continue sell-off in FY23, pull out funds from Indian equities

37,631 The amount in ₹ crore sold off by foreign portfolio investors (FPI)in the last quarter. Market analysts believe that FPI flows this fiscal would be decided by factors like the U.S. Federal Reserve's policy stance, oil prices movement and other developments in the geopolitical situation. PTI

Beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana

40.82 The number of people in crore who benefitted from the programme. It reportedly facilitates collateral-free micro-credit up to ₹10 lakh and so far ₹23.2 lakh cr. was sanctioned. Congress leader P. Chidambaram asked what kind of business could be done when 83% of the loans given were under ₹50,000. PTI

'India's gold imports take a hit during April-February 2023'

30 The percentage by which India's gold imports reduced, according to the Commerce Ministry. Due to high customs duty and global economic uncertainties, gold imports fell to $31.8 billion during this period. Imports of the yellow metal stood at $45.2 billion in the corresponding period of 2021-22. The imports are in the negative zone since August 2022. PTI

Haryana to develop 20 backward blocks under SKUY scheme

77 In ₹ crore, the amount allocated in the current financial year for the project. These funds are being provided by the Haryana government to supplement and converge the existing development inflows into the identified blocks in eight districts during the first phase of the Swaranjayanti Khand Utthan Yojana (SKUY) in the current fiscal. PTI

Children brought back from Russia to Ukraine during the war

31 The number of children brought back, according to Save Ukraine organisation CEO. Deportations of Ukrainian children have been a concern since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. According to a statement by Ukraine's UN ambassador, more than 19,500 children had been seized from their families or orphanages and forcibly deported. AP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The population bomb that never was

'Population bomb' narratives mobilised many policies and behaviours that shaped the lives of generations of Indian women. A new report revisits this controversial idea. It also states that population alone was never the problem for sustainability, nor will it be for the climate crisis.

EXPLAINER

Nayantara Sheoran Appleton

On March 27, 2023, Beniamino Callegari, associate professor at Kristiania University College, Oslo, and a member of the Earth4All modelling team, and Per Espen Stoknes, Earth4All project lead and director of the Centre for Sustainability at the BI Norwegian Business School, published their predictions about the world's human population in the form of a report by the Earth4All Initiative.

This comes five decades after reports in which some economists blamed, among other things, the planet's expanding human population for its many problems. The two researchers have revisited them and revised the original population predictions. The effort is notable for the ways in which women's reproductive rights and population control have emerged in contemporary political discourse, as well as the useful contradictions they strike with more recent reports pertaining to development policy.

What does the new report find?

In the new Earth4All Initiative report, the researchers set aside population-modelling approaches adopted by the UN, the Wittgenstein Centre ("sponsored by the European Union"), *The Lancet*, and integrated assessment models. Instead, they modelled birth rates "explicitly and causally ... as a function of GDP per person," which shows "a negative correlation between income and fertility rate". In this context, the per-capita GDP is a "proxy" for female education and socio-economic mobility, among other factors.

Based on such modelling, the researchers advanced two scenarios. In the first, called "Too Little, Too Late", Dr. Callegari and Dr. Stoknes predicted that if economic development continues as it has in the last five decades, the world's population would peak at 8.6 billion in 2050, roughly 25 years from now, and decline to 7 billion by 2100.

In the second scenario, called "The Giant Leap", the researchers concluded that the population will peak at 8.5 billion by 2040 - a decade sooner than 2050 - but then rapidly decline to around 6 billion by 2100. This, they said, will be due to our investments in poverty alleviation, gender equity, education and health, ameliorating inequality, and food and energy security. To quote from the report:

"The policies supporting the Giant Leap scenario [... represent] a pathway towards fully returning human pressures on the planetary systems to the safe zone in civilisation's long-term view, hopefully before irreversible planetary declines are triggered. However, a recovery is most plausible only for some of the planetary boundaries, such as nutrient overloading, ozone depletion, ocean acidification, and air pollution. Even in the Giant Leap scenario, although mitigation happens across the board, many of earth's ... life-supporting systems cannot be fully returned to a safe operating space by ... even 2100."

The report clarified that these population predictions are more optimistic than the kind of historic fear mongering and regressive development policies engendered by the 'population bomb' metaphor.

It also stated that population alone was never the problem for sustainability, nor will it be for the climate crisis.

Red flag: The researchers have been cautious to warn that a declining population alone won't address the issues surrounding the climate crisis. PTI

What do the findings mean?

Essentially, the findings proposed that the better and more equitable policies we make today, the lower the earth's human population will be later this century. However, the researchers have been cautious to warn that a declining population alone won't address the issues surrounding the climate crisis.

The Earth4All report is entitled 'People and Planet, 21st Century Sustainable Population Scenarios and Possible Living Standards Within Planetary Boundaries'. Aside from its predictions, it is notable because it revisits the premise of the 1968 book (*The Population Bomb* by Anne and Paul Ehrlich) and a 1972 report, and later book (*The Limits to Growth*), in which the authors made population a focus of global development policy.

But Dr. Callegari and Dr. Stoknes have been clear that humankind's impact on the environment is not driven by population numbers but instead by the luxurious consumption of the richest people.

The duo also wrote that the equitable distribution of resources (as currently available) globally can alleviate extreme poverty, even exceeding the United Nations' minimum levels.

How does it compare to other reports?

As it happens, the report also contradicted the UN 'World Populations Prospects 2022' report, which predicted that the global population would steadily rise to 10.4 billion in 2080 and then stabilise around that number in 2100.

The UN report also said that India would surpass China as the most populous country in 2023 (which it will). This, alongside our own National Family Health Survey, which most recently estimated India's total fertility rate to be 2.1 (lower in urban centres). These scenarios present India with a unique challenge: on the one hand, it will have a very large 'young population' (18-35-year-olds) that is also un- or under-employed, but on the other, it is dealing with rapidly declining fertility and a skewed women-to-men demographic ratio.

Population predictions and the kind of politics, scholarship, and policies they engender are wearing thin. Population size, especially in post-colonial nations, has become a locus for international aid agencies as well as for local elite narratives of "small families, happy families" leading to "modern nations".

These narratives essentially blame the poor for the conditions of their everyday lives and further disenfranchise them from the polity.

The local and global focus on population and fertility control through various (sometimes draconian) measures has been a reality for women in India for generations, including the *nasbandi ka waqt* (time for sterilisation), various State-level rules preventing people from holding public office if they have 'too many' children, and the recent, but now withdrawn, population control Bills.

The 'population bomb' narratives mobilised many policies and behaviours that shaped the reproductive lives of generations of Indian women - but that bomb never was.

Instead, the spectre of the bomb haunts Indian women's collective memories of reproductive justice (or lack thereof).

What do the contradictions mean?

The contradictions between the UN report and the Earth4All 2023 report are helpful because they allow us to imagine and address the conditions proposed by different studies. They also inform scholarship, activism, and policies that safeguard women's health and well-being in all possible scenarios.

The differing global projections, in the light of India's local reality, should finally enable us to draft policies that are future-facing, help tap into our 'demographic dividend', and plan for a cultural change wherein women are able to make decisions about their reproductive lives in safe, healthy, and nourishing environments.

In fact, three reports in the last two years - the UN report, India's latest National Family Health Survey, and the Earth4All report - can be productive and generative grounds for Indian policymakers as we consider some vital questions about our collective futures.

For example: India is currently in its 'demographic dividend' phase. After the current cohort of people aged 18-35 years turns 60, how does our country plan for an older population without a 'support' base of younger people?

For another: Can India's foreign policy accommodate borderless movements - both for our citizens into other countries (for work or leisure) given our 'high' population and for people from other countries to enter India in reciprocal relationships?

Yet another: What do the new predictions mean for women and their access to reproductive justices, including (but not limited) to their decision-making around having or not having children?

Dr. Nayantara Sheoran Appleton is a senior lecturer at the interdisciplinary Centre for Science in Society, Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Gist

In the new Earth4All Initiative report, the researchers modelled birth rates "explicitly and causally ... as a function of GDP per person," which shows "a negative correlation between income and fertility rate".

In one of the scenarios put forth by the researchers, they predicted that if economic development continues as it has in the last five decades, the world's population would peak at 8.6 billion in 2050, roughly 25 years from now, and decline to 7 billion by 2100.

The second scenario suggested that that the population will peak at 8.5 billion by 2040 – a decade sooner than 2050 – but then rapidly decline to around 6 billion by 2100. This, they say, will be due to our investments in poverty alleviation, gender equity, education and health, ameliorating inequality, and food and energy security.

Inter-State gang of high-end car thieves busted, six arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Grounds have police arrested a gang of six who were allegedly stealing high-end cars from other metro cities and selling them through second-hand car dealers after forging the documents and registration number plates.

The gang was exposed by chance in February after the personal assistant of MLC Bhoje Gowda spotted the legislator's SUV parked in front of a second-hand car dealer outlet. After confirming that the car was on sale, he alerted the High Grounds police, suspecting a racket.

Based on the complaint, the police detained the car dealer, which led to the arrest of the gang and the police recovered eight SUVs from them worth ₹3 crore. The accused have been identified as Naseeb Abdul Razaq, 38, a notorious car lifter, and his associates Manjunath, 45, Shabaz Khan, 31, Syed Riyaz, 34, Nayaz Khan, 32, and Imran Sheikh Ismail, 34.

Fake documents

The accused would steal expensive cars from other metro cities and bring them into the city to create fake documents and registration number plates and give them to second-hand car dealers to sell them and get them money. The dealers would get a commission for selling the cars.

The police have taken the gang into custody to ascertain their criminal network and possible involvement in other cases.

K.R. Puram, Whitefield railway stations to be revamped under Amrit Bharat scheme

Upgrading platforms, providing escalators and lifts, developing parking areas, resting rooms, beautification of stations have been proposed

Suchith Kidiyoor
BENGALURU

To get a facelift: While the Whitefield Railway Station is used by an average 8,000 passengers daily, Krishnarajapuram station sees a footfall of around 25,000. SUCHITH KIDIYOOR

After the introduction of Namma Metro service to Whitefield, rail infrastructure in the eastern part of Bengaluru is also getting a facelift. South Western Railway (SWR) is all set to revamp two railway stations – Krishnarajpuram and Whitefield – for the benefit of commuters. According to SWR officials, under the Amrit Bharat Station scheme, a total of 15 stations coming under the Bengaluru division will be developed, including these two stations located on the Bengaluru-Jolarpettai Junction line.

An official of the SWR said, "Various amenities are proposed under the scheme for the benefit of passengers, including upgrading platforms, providing escalators and lifts, developing parking areas, resting rooms, beautification of stations, and others."

No escalators, lifts

At present, the skywalks provided to change the platforms at the two stations do not have escalators and lifts. These two stations are being used by daily travellers as well as long-distance travelers.

The official said, "In Bengaluru, the Sir M. Visvesvaraya Terminal at Baiyappanahalli has set a standard in providing passenger amenities. On similar lines, Yeshwantpur and Cantonment stations are being developed. A total of 15 stations under the Bengaluru division have been identified under the Amrit Bharat scheme to upgrade the infrastructure, which also improves the travel experience." Under the SWR, a total of 55 stations have been identified for development under the scheme.

The Krishnarajapuram Railway Station sees a footfall of around 25,000 while the Whitefield station is used by an average 8,000 passengers daily. The approximate number of passengers travelling from Bengaluru city to Whitefield is 20,000. The official said that 23 trains are operated on the line, including 16 MEMU services, 6 express trains and one DEMU train.

Yeshodhara G., who regularly travels on the MEMU train between Whitefield and Baiyappanahalli, said, "In the evening hours, I take the MEMU train to reach Baiyappanahalli from Whitefield. It takes just ₹10 to travel the distance. Every day, hundreds of people use the MEMU train to reach the city from other areas. The SWR should come out with a master plan to develop three stations on the line – Whitefield, Hoodi, and Krishnarajapuram. At Whitefield, other than passengers, hundreds of people use the skywalk to reach the other end of the road which is built parallel to the railway bridge. If escalators are provided, pedestrians also get benefited. There is no proper signage for passengers to reach the ticket counter. Also, passenger information system should be installed for the benefit of people."

Integrating with metro

Rail activist Sanjeev Dyamannavar added, "While upgrading the infrastructure, the SWR also came up with plans on integrating with the metro stations that are recently opened for commercial operations. At present, people are forced to walk on busy roads to access the metro station from the railway station at K.R. Puram. At Whitefield, there is no direct access from the railway station. In future, once the quadrupling of the Cantonment and Whitefield sections gets completed, there will be more footfall of passengers in these stations. Providing good integration with other modes of transport helps people in a big way."

Another fish kill in city; sewage entry into Seetharampalya lake blamed for the incident

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Citizens have alleged that such incidents occur as a result of lack of maintenance at various levels by BBMP and BWSSB.

A fish-kill incident was reported at Seetharampalya lake on Saturday after sewage entered the lake following the recent rain. With this incident, a total of four fish-kill incidents have occurred in the city this year.

According to citizen activists, fish-kill incidents have occurred twice at Kothanur lake and once at Iblur lake so far. Citizens have alleged that such incidents occur as a result of a lack of maintenance at various levels by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) officials.

"The BBMP has set aside a portion of its budget to build diversion channels near the mouth of lakes to keep away sewage. However, there is no maintenance of these inlets and when there is some blockage, even solid waste enters the lakes," said Raghavendra Pachhapur of ActionAid India.

He added, "While BBMP officials are not concerned about the water quality, the BWSSB also does not ensure to keep the water clean."

Attributed to rain

BBMP officials, however, said that at most lakes in the city, active monitoring of inlets was taking place regularly and attributed the fish-kill incidents to rain, which results in a change in water quality. "The BWSSB should control the entry of unauthorised sewage into lakes," said Vijay Haridas, Chief Engineer, Lakes, BBMP.

Speaking about the fish kill at Seetharampalya lake, Bhuprada, Executive Engineer (Lakes) of Mahadevapura Zone, BBMP, said, "There is no diversion channel at this lake. This was handed over to the BBMP in 2020 and it was being maintained by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) under their CSR programme. We have not started the development of this lake under priority yet."

"When it recently rained, sewage entered through the inlets, thereby causing the fish kill. We will consider developing this lake on priority in next year's budget," she said.

'Make business easier'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Office of Executive Education Programmes at IIM Bangalore, in partnership with Toulouse Business School, France, hosted the fifth edition of the International Conference on Future of Aviation and Aerospace on Sunday wherein senior executives from aviation and aerospace industries across India participated.

Capt. Gopinath, founder and CEO, Deccan Aviation and Air Deccan, said, "Business reforms are the need of the hour. The Indian government must work towards making business easier. Our aircraft need not go abroad for checks and maintenance."

Satyaki Raghunath, chief strategy and development officer, BIAL, spoke about the current landscape of airport operations in India.

PNG and CNG prices reduced by ₹7 per unit

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

GAIL Gas Ltd. reduced the prices of CNG and domestic PNG in Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, and Dakshina Kannada districts with effect from Sunday.

A release stated that the prices have been reduced by ₹7 per unit. PNG will be available at ₹51.50 per SCM and CNG at ₹82.50 per kg. GAIL Gas Ltd. has maintained that the revision in the pricing is done as per the Central government's guidelines to pass on new domestic gas pricing benefits to its customers.

"The new guidelines aim to establish a stable pricing regime for consumers," the release said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the public that my client **Mr. Nagesh K.V.** is intending to purchase the immovable Property bearing Municipal No. 20/1 (Old No. 7/2), having BBMP PID No. 66-23-20/1, situated at 1st Main Road, Chikka Adugodi, Tavarekere Village, Bengaluru, measuring East to West 30 ft., North to South 40 ft., totally measuring 1200 sq. ft., from its owner L. Ramachandra and L. Srinivasa.

If anybody or any authority having any right, title, claims, interest or objections over the same, may file their objections with documents to below mentioned address within **7 days** from the date of this public notice. Failing which my client will proceed to purchase the above said Property by treating no one has objections in respect of the said properties.

Sd/-
Subrahmanya Hegde
Advocate
ANANDA & HEGDE LAW ASSOCIATES
76-77, Krishna Krupa Building
Ground Floor, 2nd Main Road
Sheshadripuram, Bangalore-20.
Mob: 9060069259.

Date : 07.04.2023
Place : Bangalore

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that my client **AD AGE OUTDOOR ADVERTISING PVT LTD** is a registered company having its office in Hyderabad, TS & Branch Office in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

This is hereby informed that my client AD AGE OUTDOOR ADVERTISING PVT LTD have secured a Tender issued by BHURAT BENGALURU MAHANAGAR PALIKE (BBMP) for development of SKY WALKs/FOBS TENDER.

NOTIFICATION:EE/RI/Spl.Div/Tend/12/2017-18 dt 16-10-2017. Accordingly was allotted 11 spaces for Sky Walks for a period of 30 years. This is to inform that one Mr Syed Iqbal Mehdi & Syed Ali Ahmed Mehdi in their personal capacity are trying to SALE/MORTGAGE/SUB-LEASE the 11 allotted sky walks and its property without approval from management/board of directors of AD AGE OUTDOOR ADVERTISING PVT LTD.

General public is hereby informed not to deal with Mr Syed Iqbal Mehdi and Syed Ali Mehdi in any manner in respect of FOB's/Sky walks in Benguluru Karnataka. Any person hereby dealing with Syed Iqbal Medhi, Syed Ali Ahmed Mehdi and their agents shall do the same at his own cost and peril and they shall be responsible for the consequences arising thereafter.

S.Y. ZAINULABEDIN, *B.A.LLB, LL.M.*
Advocate, # 3-1-125/126, J K Apartments, Kachiguda, Hyd-TS, **Cell: 9390541331**

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is hereby informed that my client **Sri Venkatesh. G.,** S/o. late Gangaiah, is purchasing the Schedule Property mentioned below from its Owner **Sri. H. N. Gowda, S/o. late Honne Gowda,** who claims that he is the absolute owner having right, title and interest in the Schedule Property.

Any person/s or legal entity/s having any claim, right, title, interest or any objections and or opposing and development of further sale of property in bits and pieces in whatsoever manner may lodge his/her/their objections with relevant documentary proof to the undersigned within **15 (FIFTEEN)** days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, it will be presumed that no other person/s of legal entity/s has got any claim, right, title, interest or charge over the above said properly and my client will proceed to complete the sale transactions and further alienate the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY

All that part and parcel of the residential property bearing Municipal No.4, B.B.M.P.- Old Ward No.13, New Ward No.68, Bengaluru North, Yalahanka Hobli, Jarakabande Kaval Village Sy. No.1 (R.S. No. 126 and 139) Property Blocks 21 and 30 and Property No.99, as per B.B.M.P. Katha, Bengaluru, Gelayarabalaga, 1st 'F' Main Road, P.I.D. No- 13-93-4, Municipal No.4 Property, measuring East-West : 30 Feet and North–South : 40 Feet totalling to 1200 Square Feet together with Ground Floor ACC Sheet residential house measuring about 400 Square Feet and bounded on the

East by: Property No.99-A belonging to Sri Nagarappa
West by: Property No.98 belonging Sri K.T. Ramaiah
North by: Road
South by: Property No.106

Sri K.A. Prakash, B.Sc., LL.B.
Advocate
492, 1st Floor, K.N. Complex, 4th Cross, Sampige Road, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru-03
Phone: 9341248422

Place: Bangalore **Date: 09-04-2022**

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

"Today happens to be the Birth Anniversary of one of the greatest Coonoorians,

Dr. A.M. SELVARAJ,

Professor of Medicine, Madras Medical College, fondly called as AMS, he was revered by his Pupils, Juniors and Peers alike for his encyclopaedic knowledge in Medicine, his dedication in treating patients, his incredible work ethics and of course his eccentricities".

Facebook April 10th 2019.

10-04-1930

Prof. (Dr.) ALANDUR MEGHANATHAN SELVARAJ

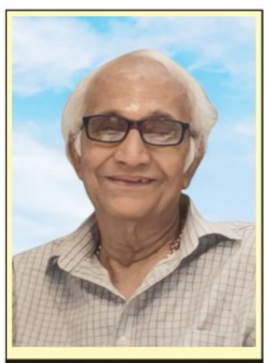
10th April 1930 – 23rd September 2011 – A Tribute

This year we have Instituted the " DR. A.M.Selvaraj Award for Excellence in Clinical Medicine". Along with a Cash Prize for Students of the College where he studied and worked as an Honorary Physician.

- The Rajiv Gandhi General Hospital and Medical College.

Dr. ARCOT LAKSHMANSWAMY
MEGHANATHAN MUDALIAR EDUCATIONAL TRUST
SRI LAKSHMI DEVI CHARITABLE TRUST
DR. ALANDUR MEGHANATHAN SELVARAJ MEDICAL TRUST
Anna Nagar, Chennai.
Ph: 044 - 43557496 Cell : 9790826928

DEATH



LV Subramaniam

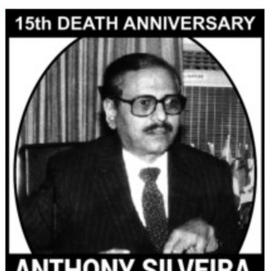
25.2.1934 to 8.4.2023

Passed away peacefully in Singapore.
Touched many lives.
Forever in our hearts with love and gratitude.

Nalini Subramaniam
Gayatri Sriram
Raj Sriram
Laasya Sriram
Shloka Sriram
Family & Friends

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

15th DEATH ANNIVERSARY



ANTHONY SILVEIRA
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06.02.1928 - 10.04.2008

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TEST NO.	DATE
AIPMT - 1	16TH APRIL 2023
AIPMT - 2	25TH APRIL 2023
AIPMT - 3	02ND MAY 2023
AIPMT - 4	07TH MAY 2023
AIPMT - 5	13TH MAY 2023

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, GITHA W/O Murugan (DOB: 03/05/1989) R/O No 15, N Jai Bhimanagar, Sadaramangala, Kadugodi plantation, Bangalore 560067, have changed my name to Geetha vide affidavit dated 31.03.23 at Bangalore

I Channabasappa s/o Mallikarjun R/o Kamalapur dist Kalaburgi has changed my name to Channabasappa Goni s/o Mallikarjun Goni vide affidavit Dt. 30/03/2023 sworn before notary Prakash Diggi, Kalaburgi.

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E-mail : purchase@oushadhi.org

P/43/2023-24 Date: 10.4.2023

RE-TENDER NOTICE

Re-E-Tenders & Re-Tenders are invited for the supply of **I)** Raw Materials and **II)** Containers & Packing Materials for the period **15th May 2023** to **30th September 2023**. Last date of submission of both Tenders: **25.4.2023.** Re-E-Tenders can be downloaded from the website **www.etenders.kerala.gov.in** & Re-Tenders from **www.oushadhitender.com.** For more details, please visit our website **www.oushadhi.org** or contact our Purchase Division at Kuttanellur.

(Sd/-)
Thrissur Managing Director

Why a non-invasive test for endometriosis is taking such a long time

People with endometriosis today wait for 6.7 years on average for diagnosis. That might change with a new test that can detect the disease through blood samples, if successful. The test promises to reduce time for diagnosis, disease progress, and could lead to fewer years of discomfort

PULSE-CHECK

Sneha Khedkar

Endometriosis is a painful chronic disease in which tissue similar to the lining of the uterus, or endometrium, grows outside of it. Despite its prevalence, popular awareness of endometriosis remains low even as its diagnosis is marred by experiences of medical misogyny and gaslighting.

This year, however, there may also be some (cautious) cheer: a U.S.-based company named DotLab has announced a blood test to reliably diagnose endometriosis. The significance of this technology is highlighted by the fact that people have to wait for 6.7 years on average for a diagnosis, even as the number of people with endometriosis could be much higher than the estimated 190 million worldwide (about 42 million in India alone), due to the number of cases that go undiagnosed.

Game changer: The test relies on detecting microRNA, which are small, non-coding RNA segments that regulate gene expression. ISTOCKPHOTO

Why is endometriosis hard to diagnose?

Doctors often struggle to diagnose endometriosis because of its variety of symptoms, including pain during menstruation, urination, sexual intercourse, bowel movements, fatigue, and sometimes infertility. There are also no reliable non-invasive diagnostic tools (ultrasound can't accurately detect all forms of endometriosis). Laparoscopic surgery is required for a definitive diagnosis.

DotLab has said that its blood test is the first of its kind: a non-invasive method to accurately diagnose endometriosis.

This test relies on detecting microRNA, which are small, non-coding RNA segments that regulate gene expression. Many studies have identified microRNAs that are expressed differently in people with endometriosis. So, on paper at least, researchers can use these unique expression patterns as a sign of the disease. Currently, researchers are exploring the use of microRNA from saliva and blood as diagnostic biomarkers.

The blood test by DotLab is the product of a study (published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology* in March 2020) in which researchers identified blood-based microRNAs that were expressed differently in people with endometriosis, relative to a group of people who didn't have the disease.

The researchers then created an algorithm combining the expression values of these microRNAs to predict the presence or absence of endometriosis. They validated it with a different group of people and found that it was able to accurately identify those who did have endometriosis.

Is the new test available to use?

Ramanaiah Mamillapalli, a research scientist at the Yale School of Medicine who was involved in the study, cautioned that "this microRNA screen is at testing level only". Indeed, DotLab is actively recruiting people to participate in ongoing clinical trials expected to be completed by September 2024. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration hasn't yet approved the test.

The researchers also noted that while the test was able to accurately identify both mild and advanced endometriosis, it wasn't able to differentiate between the stage and the severity of the disease.

Abhishek Mangeshikar, director of the Indian Centre for Endometriosis, an "educational resource" for physicians and patients, agreed that the test could give a 'yes' or 'no' answer about whether someone has endometriosis – "but it's not giving you a status or a stage of the disease ... and which organs [could be] involved."

He also noted the importance of the test's sensitivity and specificity, found to be 83% and 96%, respectively.

Sensitivity refers to the test's ability to correctly identify the disease based on microRNA expression levels, i.e. its ability to identify true-positive results. Specificity is a measure of the test's ability to reliably say that some abnormal microRNA expression is the result of endometriosis, and not some other condition. It's the test's ability to avoid false-positive results.

Hugh Taylor, the chief of obstetrics and gynaecology at Yale-New Haven Hospital, said there is a way to improve these numbers: "There are thousands of microRNAs expressed differently in endometriosis, so we can use combinations to get a very specific disease signature."

Dr. Taylor helped develop the test's technique that DotLab has since patented.

What do we know about endometriosis?

Endometriosis was first characterised in 1860 but its first biomarkers were found only 150 years later.

"People have been looking for biomarkers of endometriosis for years," Dr. Taylor said. Most of them were related to inflammation, which is not specific to endometriosis because it's observed in many diseases. Even when a marker was found, the results were inconsistent.

"Endometriosis is not a life-threatening disease and it comes under reproductive biology, which is not greatly supported by funding agencies," Dr. Mamillapalli said. "So pharma companies are not focusing enough on this disease."

Endometriosis research is severely underfunded worldwide. A May 2022 report by the U.S. National Institutes of Health stated that endometriosis research accounted for only 0.05% of the institutes' total research budget.

There are isolated pockets of well-funded research, however. In 2021, for instance, Rahul Gajbhiye, a clinician-scientist at the Indian Council of Medical Research's National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health, Mumbai, received a grant of ₹3.6 crore to study endometriosis.

Better funding is one component of designing effective and accessible diagnostic tools.

Another is affordability. "If the test is expensive, I may prescribe it only as an additional measure, if a patient's clinical history is suggestive of endometriosis but they don't have any positive imaging findings," Dr. Mangeshikar said. "But if it is cost-sensitive, then this [could] become a routine screening test as part of the diagnostic pathway."

What are the benefits of a test for endometriosis?

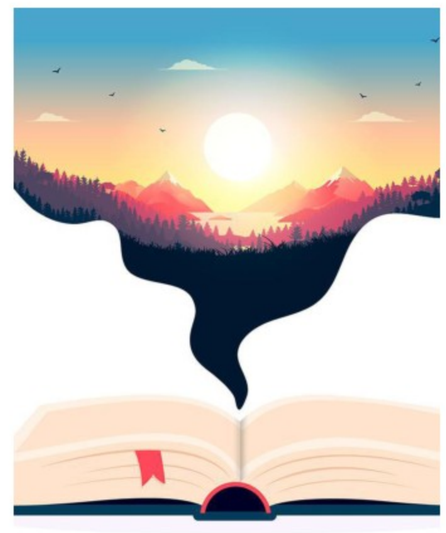
Further, if the test is successful, it could have clinical implications that include reduced time to diagnosis, disease progress, fewer years of discomfort, and lower surgical risk.

Ananya Petkar, an independent gynaecologist and former faculty member at Mumbai's KEM Hospital, noted that doctors prescribe treatment for symptomatic relief even before a formal diagnosis and that most doctors only advise surgery if medical management does not successfully ameliorate symptoms.

"If a blood test tells you the diagnosis, there is no need to do a laparoscopy if [the person] is benefitting from medical management," Dr. Petkar said. She added that the results of the test sound promising, and if successful, it could reduce the time to diagnosis.

In addition to these clinical implications, understanding which microRNAs are abnormal in endometriosis could also help researchers identify which genes, and thus which pathways, are involved in the disease, which in turn could help unravel its complex biology and offer potential targets for therapy.

Sneha Khedkar is a biologist-turned freelance science journalist based out of Bengaluru.



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Juice it up? What are you talking about?

Some of my friends clam up whenever my father walks into the room

S. Upendran

"So, what do you think of mock presentation? Do you think my boss will like it?"

"I'm sure she will. But its a bit long. You should consider shortening it because in several places it sounds like you're repeating yourself. Also, you need to juice it up a bit."

"Juice it up? What are you talking about?"

"The expression 'juice up' has several different meanings. One of the meanings is to make something a little more interesting or attractive."

"In other words, you want me to spice things up a bit!"

"Exactly, I want you to make the presentation look and sound interesting. You need to make it lively. Here's an example, the writer spent weeks trying to juice up the dialogue."

"Do you think having colourful slides will help juice up my presentation?"

"That's a good example of how to use 'juice up'. But no, I don't think colourful slides will juice up the presentation. You should think of something else."

"But I don't really have the time. My presentation....."

"You still have a couple of days. You could consider juicing it up by asking certain provocative questions. That's just a suggestion."

"I'll think about it. Maybe I can ask Dinesh."

"Talking about Dinesh, how was dinner last night? Did you guys have a good time?"

"Yes, Dinesh, Sujatha and I were having a really great time. Dinesh was cracking a lot of jokes and keeping us entertained. But when Ganesh walked into the restaurant, he just stopped talking. Hardly spoke after that."

"Dinesh doesn't like Ganesh. So it's not surprising that he just clammed up."

"Clammed up? Does it mean to stop talking?"

"Yes, that's right! When you clamp up, you don't just stop talking, you stop talking all of a sudden. Its very abrupt. You're talking one minute and....."

"The next, you stop talking. But why? Is it because you see someone you don't like?"

"That could be a reason. Sometimes, people clam up because they don't wish to talk about something."

"In other words, they wish to avoid saying something. They don't wish to reveal anything."

"That's right! People who are shy or very nervous clam up when they're in the company of others. For example, some of my friends clam up whenever my father walks into the room."

upendrankye@gmail.com

THE DAILY QUIZ

World Health Day was celebrated on April 7. Here's a quiz on health and ailments

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Ramya Kannan

QUESTION #1
Why is April 7 chosen as World Health Day?

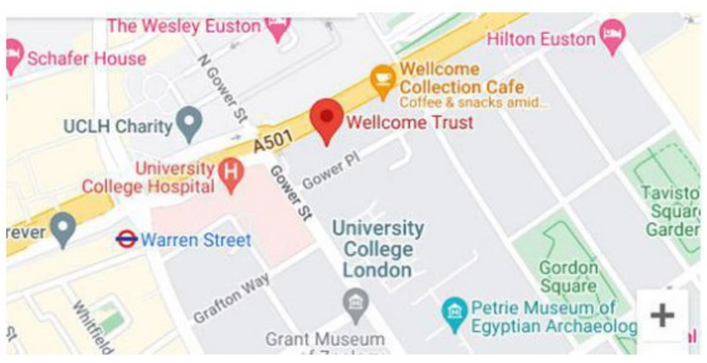
QUESTION #2
Name this physician, who went on to serve as a Mayor, Chief Minister and Governor and worked towards ensuring quality health care for every citizen. There is also a prestigious award named after him.

QUESTION #3
This fancy 'diet drug', known as a GLP-1 agonist, works to reduce appetite. What is the popular brand name by which this drug is now known?

QUESTION #4
There are multiple definitions for the things that doctors do, some quite prominent, others not so. For instance, do you know who a nocturnist is?

QUESTION #5
Sphenopalatine ganglioneuralgia is a non- threatening condition that is self limiting. The trick to be relieved of it is to press your tongue against the roof of your mouth. What is the condition more popularly known as?

QUESTION #6
The Hindi name for this disease literally translates to Black Fever, to indicate the pallor the skin turns during and after the fever. The skin turns scaly, and enlargement of the liver and spleen are characteristic symptoms. The protozoan parasite is spread by the sandfly. What is the disease called?



Make the connection between the three images

Answers to the previous day's quiz:
1. How is Good Friday determined? **Ans: Based on spring equinox, full moon**
2.This cricketer hit the fastest ODI 50. The record is now held by another cricketer. Name both. **Ans: Sanath Jayasuriya, AB de Villiers**
3. Which Pokémon character is named after Jackie Chan? **Ans: Hitmonchan**
4. Name this scientist known for his discoveries in molecular biophysics.**Ans: G. N. Ramachandran**
5. The National Beer Day is celebrated in the U.S. as an Act was signed to reverse the prohibition on beer. Name the Act and the President who signed it. **Ans: Cullen-Harrion Act, Franklin D. Roosevelt**
6. Visual question: **Ans: 2001 Mars Odyssey**

Early Birds
Asharaf Basha – K.N. Viswanathan

Word of the day

Perfunctory:
done as a duty or habit, without real interest, attention or feeling

Synonyms: superficial, casual, cursory

Usage: *They only made a perfunctory effort*

Pronounciation: bit.ly/perfunctorynew

International Phonetic Alphabet: pəˈfʌŋktəri/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Domestic workers want new govt. to provide them recognition, social security

There are 6 lakh to 7 lakh domestic workers in the State; while most of them are influenced by societal and peer pressure, some workers have empowered themselves to see beyond that. They hope the new government gives them the identity of labourers

Jahnavi T.R.
Pavana J.
BENGALURU

Make Compulsory Registration for Employers In Welfare Board
Compulsory Registration of Domestic Workers In Welfare Board
A file photo of domestic workers staging a protest in Bengaluru.

Mahalakshmi has two children. One of them is in Class 5 while the other has just completed Class 10. While she is a domestic worker in Vidyaranyapura, she hopes to provide quality education for her children so that they build a better future for themselves. However, to send her children to private or aided educational institutions, she does not have enough money. For her, the major demand she could place before any government is for educational scholarship.

"When candidates come near my house for campaigning, I will ask them if they can promise scholarships to my children. Then, I will see whom to vote for," she said.

For many domestic workers like her, their demands from the new government are mostly on a micro level. Savitha, another worker at Puttenahalli, travels around 5 km every day to her workplaces. She gets down at a bus stop, works at two houses and then catches a bus again to reach the third one. "I can see that the government has made good roads and provided many buses, but ticket prices eat up half of my salary. I hope the new government reduces ticket prices or give us some concession," she said.

There are around 6 lakh to 7 lakh domestic workers in the State. While most of them are influenced by societal and peer pressure, some workers have empowered themselves to see beyond that.

Karnataka Votes 2023

"As a woman and as a domestic worker, I will look for a party which will fight for our causes. Like every other sector in society, we are also burdened by the rising prices of all commodities. We want leaders who can reduce this burden and not just do communal politics," said Radha, another domestic worker.

Apart from individualistic issues, the sector also has a few important demands for the Minister who will head the Labour Department. "We hope the new government in Karnataka works for our welfare and gives us the identity of labourers. We want to be spoken to and treated with dignity. Registration, recognition, and social security are what we ask for," said Geetha Menon, joint secretary of the Domestic Workers' Rights Union.

(This is the first part of a series on what people want – people from sectors whose voices are often unheard, and who are not on the top of priorities in vote-bank politics.)

INBRIEF

Two Bangladeshi nationals arrested for illegal stay

The Kadugodi police have arrested two Bangladeshi nationals allegedly staying illegally at a labour colony at Chikkabanahalli for many years.

Based on a tip-off from a city-based NGO, a team of police tracked down the accused in the labour colony at Chikkabanahalli on April 6 and arrested Shafiq, 29, and Bilal Mohammed Alam, 34, who were working as daily wage labourers.

Initially, the duo refused to admit that they are Bangladeshi nationals, but a detailed probe led them to confess, said the police. The police added that the two said they had crossed the porous border to come to India and reached West Bengal. After working as labourers for some time, they moved to many metro cities before landing in Bengaluru four years ago.

The police have booked them under the Foreigners Act and are investigating further to ascertain whether there are more Bangladeshi nationals staying illegally in the city.

Text & Context
A weekday feature on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and a quiz. In the latest issue (April 10, Monday), the following explainer is available:

- The population bomb that never was
bit.ly/populationbombth

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access this article. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access the article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Two-day 'Technology Vision 2047' meet at IISc

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) is hosting a two-day regional consultative meeting for Technology Vision 2047, supported by Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) on April 27 and 28.

The meet also invites the youth of the country to furnish their proposals regarding their visionary dreams for a sustainable and developed India. Students from pre-university and universities that confer bachelor's degrees are encouraged to participate in this conclave by submitting proposals. The proposals should be submitted by April 10. An evaluation committee at IISc will assess all submissions and curate a shortlist of 25 proposals for participation in the conclave.

This initiative brings together technology experts, thought leaders and enthusiasts to discuss and envision the future of technology and its potential for shaping a better India and a better future.

A student conclave session is a part of the two-day meet and it seeks to amalgamate innovative and creative ideas, to explore how technology can positively impact and contribute towards achieving the sustainable development goals of India.

The event offers an opportunity for students to showcase their ideas/vision to an assemblage of industry experts, policymakers and academic luminaries, thereby garnering invaluable feedback to fine-tune their vision. In addition, a competitive session will be organised for the student teams during the conclave, with prizes awarded to the top three performing teams.

There will be deliberations on UAV for urban transport, cargo, ambulance; UAV and satellites for precision agriculture, engineering and medicine; and space and earth - mutual benefit, human activities and their impact on climate and ecosystem, among others.

Three youths arrested for murdering minor boy

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Kadugondanahalli police on Sunday arrested three youths who allegedly bludgeoned a minor boy to death over a trivial row and dumped his body near railway tracks on April 3.

The accused have been identified as Suhail Ulla Shariff, 19, Syed Shoib, 20, and Mohammed Hussain, 18.

According to the police, the trio are friends and residents of Tannary Road and work in puncture shop, car garage, and mobile repair shop.

The deceased, Satish M., 15, was working as a caretaker of a horse stable and also used to take children on horse rides around the stable.

Background
Bhimashankar Guled, DCP, East division, said Suhail had approached Satish while he was at Richards Park asking him to allow him to take a picture with the horse. Satish refused outright, following which Suhail slapped him.

Before the argument continued, passers-by intervened and pacified them. A few days later, Suhail went to a tea shop alone where Satish was having tea with his friends. Satish told his friends about the previous confrontation, following which they slapped Suhail.

On April 3, while having tea at a roadside shop, Suhail and two other accused noticed Satish returning home from work. The trio took him near the railway tracks on the pretext of talking and assaulted him with logs which they found nearby, said the police. Satish sustained severe injuries and succumbed to them at the spot.

CCTV camera footage
The police recovered the body, and as part of the investigation, analyzed the CCTV camera footage from in and around the area. The police zeroed in on Suhail and his friends and picked them up for investigation. A detailed probe led them to confess to the crime, the police said.

Pillion rider killed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 20-year-old pillion rider was killed while the rider sustained minor injuries when the scooter they were travelling on collided with a motorcycle on Kanakapura Road in K.S. Layout traffic police station limits on Sunday.

The deceased has been identified as Drushya, 20, while the rider, Abhishek, 26, has been hospitalised. They were riding from Vasanthapura to Sarakki when the accident occurred. According to the police, the accident occurred around 12.30 a.m. when a motorcycle came from the wrong side on a one-way road and collided with the scooter.

The accused, identified as Deepak, took them to a nearby hospital in an autorickshaw and fled, the police said.

The doctors who examined Drushya declared him dead on arrival due to internal bleeding. Drushya was a resident of Kanakapura Road and worked in lawn maintenance service. Abhishek is a car driver.

The police seized Deepak's bike after finding it in a service centre near the accident site. They identified it after matching a broken piece to the bike's front number plate, they said. A case has been registered against him.

Cloud over appointment of Lokanath as Vice-Chancellor of Mysore university

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

The allegation of covering up a cheating case against Lokanath N.K., who was recently appointed Vice-Chancellor (VC) of the University of Mysore, in the process of his selection has now come to the fore.

It has also turned out that the Higher Education Department had not shortlisted his name for the post citing irregularities during his elevation as professor.

A cheating case was filed against Prof. Lokanath at Saraswathipuram police station (Crime Number: 0086/2020) on November 4, 2020.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Lokanath defended his appointment stating that he had obtained a stay on the case from the Karnataka High Court.

Interestingly, while the last date for the application submission was November 28, 2022, the stay on the case was obtained on November 29, 2022. The department announced the notification for the selection of the VC of the University of Mysore on November 8, 2022, and applications were to be submitted within 20 days.

Lokanath N.K. was recently appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mysore.

Shashidhar D.V., a resident of Jayalakshmipuram, Mysuru, had filed a complaint against Mr. Lokanath and 12 others in a property encroachment case, which was chargesheeted by the Saraswathipuram police on November 4, 2020. The case is pending in the JMFC Court-III, Mysuru.

"In the notification, the Higher Education Department had mentioned that a person currently in service is required to submit an attested certificate from their employer to confirm that no departmental/criminal inquiry is pending/not intended to be initiated against them and not previously initiated and penalised and that he/she is neither having a tainted service history nor is their appointment in dispute," said a source.

Disqualified
Also, Mr . Lokanath's application was disqualified by the department in the scrutiny stage. In the inquiry report of Justice Rangavittalachar Commission, which was submitted to the government in 2009 on violations in appointments of professors during 2007, it is stated that Mr. Lokanath did not have a minimum of 10 years of regular teaching experience as prescribed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to be appointed as a professor. During the scrutiny, the department stated there is an appointment dispute against Mr. Lokanath, and hence, he is not eligible as per the UGC regulation.

The search committee headed by M.S. Shivakumar, former VC of CMR University, Bengaluru, had recommended the names of G. Venkatesh Kumar, D.S. Guru, and Sharath Ananthmurthy to the government for the post at first. However, following a writ petition challenging this selection, the government again called a fresh meeting of the search committee on March 16, 2023. Mr. Lokanath's name figured in this recommendation and Mr. Kumar's name was dropped.

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, APR. 10		
RISE	06:10	SET 18:32
RISE	22:28	SET 09:06
TUESDAY, APR. 11		
RISE	06:10	SET 18:32
RISE	23:31	SET 10:02
WEDNESDAY, APR. 12		
RISE	06:09	SET 18:32
RISE	00:00	SET 11:02

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	34	26
Mysuru	35	21
Bengaluru	33	22

Bengaluru Today
34°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and humid. Night also will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
35°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and humid. Night also will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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Man held, contraband seized

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

The Central Crime Branch personnel of Mangaluru City Police on Saturday arrested a man on the charge of shipping MDMA worth ₹7.5 lakh from Bengaluru to Mangaluru. The police gave the name of the accused as C. Abdulla, 29, a resident of Chengala in Cherkala of Kasaragod.

Besides the contraband, the police also seized the car used for transporting the drug, a mobile phone, and ₹1,260 in cash. The seized articles were together worth ₹17,61,260.

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INBRIEF

Y.S.V. Datta to contest as an Independent from Kadur

Former legislator Y.S.V. Datta, on Sunday, declared that he will contest as an Independent candidate from the Kadur seat in the Assembly elections. He also launched his campaign to seek 'one vote and one vote' from the public in a meeting in Kadur.

Mr. Datta, who was elected to the Assembly on the JD(S) ticket in 2013, joined the Congress early this year, hoping to get a chance to contest from Kadur. As the party denied him ticket, he convened a meeting of his supporters in the town.

Addressing the public, Mr. Datta said that he had joined the Congress as per the wish of his supporters. And now, he has decided to contest as an Independent candidate following the wishes of his supporters. "I am appealing to you to vote and also donate me a note (of currency) for the campaign. I will come to all villages and hold meetings in your place and seek your blessings," he said. He stretched his arms with his towel, seeking financial support. Many people, including women, came forward to offer their contributions. A person offered ₹2 lakh in cheque, while another offered ₹50,000 in cash. Meanwhile, answering a question on Mr. Datta's dissatisfaction, KPCC chief D.K. Shivakumar said the former legislator deserved a suitable position. "We will give him [that]," he said.

Shivalinge Gowda joins Congress in Arsikere

Karnataka Votes 2023

Former JD(S) MLA K.M. Shivalinge Gowda formally joined the Congress in a public rally at Arsikere, in the presence of Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar. Mr. Shivalinge Gowda, following differences with JD(S) leaders, resigned as a JD(S) MLA recently. He was welcomed by Congress leaders to the party.

Mr. Siddaramaiah, addressing the public, said that he and Mr. Shivakumar would convince the party high-command and get the party ticket for Mr. Shivalinge Gowda. "We will get party ticket for Shivalinge Gowda. It is your responsibility to get him elected," he told the public. When a few among the public raised their voice, demanding a Cabinet berth for Mr. Shivalinge Gowda, Mr. Siddaramaiah said, "First you bring the party to power. We will see it later", he said.

Further, he said Arsikere constituency got many development works, including Yettinahole project, because of Mr. Shivalinge Gowda's efforts.

Tiger occupancy on the decline in Western Ghats landscape: Report

It flags habitat loss, fragmentation, poaching, wildlife trade, human-animal conflict, and proliferation of invasive species as areas of major concern

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The Status of Tigers 2022 report released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Mysuru on Sunday should serve as an eyeopener to the State government pushing for infrastructure and development projects in forest lands as the tiger numbers have shown a decline in the Western Ghats landscape.

The Western Ghats landscape comprises the States of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Goa and while there were 981 tigers in the region in the 2018 enumeration exercise, only 824 unique tigers were recorded in 2022 thus indicating a significant decline.

Tiger occupancy has declined in Western Ghats landscape though their numbers have increased or is stable in protected areas like Bandipur and Nagarahole. FILE PHOTO

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has expressed concern that this could also be reflective of a decline in stability in terms of park management and protection. ''The Nilgiri cluster is home to the world's largest tiger population but the recent data has shown a decrease in tiger occupancy throughout the Western Ghats, except in a few areas like Kali (Anshi Dandeli)'', according to the Tiger Status 2022 report.

Senior State Forest Department officials said that the analysis is with reference to the entire landscape as such comprising the four States and Karnataka has fared better in this regard especially in protected areas. ''The landscape figures would not be reflected in the tiger numbers for individual State when it is released and we are confident that the actual tiger numbers in Karnataka was bound to increase compared to 2018 figures of 524 tigers," said the officials. Incidentally, the report too notes that the decline is outside protected areas while it had increased in Bandipur and Nagarahole and was stable in Bhadra.

But the officials concurred with the findings that there was too much anthropogenic pressure outside the protected areas. Within Karnataka, the decline in tiger occupancy has been observed in BRT Hills and the border region of Goa and Karnataka. In addition, there was a significant decline in tiger occupancy in the Mookambika-Sharavathi-Sirsi landscape within the State, as per the report.

It has flagged habitat loss, fragmentation, poaching, illegal wildlife trade, human-animal conflict and proliferation of invasive species as areas of major concern and called for mitigatory measures like habitat restoration.

The status report mentions that with the increasing human footprint and development, there was an increase in interface between humans and wildlife resulting in conflict situation. But it has also red flagged the spread of invasive species across large tracts of protected areas as a major concern.

Echoing the status report's views, wildlife conservationists have expressed concern over the slew of linear projects that is being approved in the State cutting across forests and buffer areas. In addition, there is wanton approval of forest land for non-forestry purposes, conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes and denotification of deemed forests all of which will have a negative bearing on landscape harbouring wildlife, warn the conservationists.

Tigers and leopards elude PM during his Bandipur safari

R. Krishna Kumar
MYSURU

Tigers and leopards proved to be elusive for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who embarked on a safari at the Bandipur Tiger Reserve on Sunday.

However, the Prime Minister had a good sighting of scores of elephants, including a few large herds each with 20 to 25 members, a large number of gaurs, spotted deer and sambar besides a slew of birds, according to sources.

Mr. Modi, who arrived in Mysuru on Saturday night to take part in a commemorative event to mark 50 years of Project Tiger at Mysuru, left for Bandipur which is about 80 km from the city by a helicopter.

He landed at Melkamanahalli on the outskirts of the tiger reserve around 7.20 a.m. and immediately walked towards the Martyrs Memorial and paid his respects to the Forest Department staff who had died in the line of duty.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi taking a jungle safari and clicking photographs during his visit to Bandipur on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SPG stick to route

Soon afterwards, the Prime Minister – who was donning a sun hat and wearing a khaki jacket – shifted to an open jeep and left for the safari at Bandipur, which is spread over 912.04 sq km.

Sources said Mr. Modi expressed happiness at the sightings and joked at the Special Protection Group (SPG) that their security drill may have perhaps forced the tigers and leopards to retreat.

Though officials were keen to take an alternative safari route in their bid to ensure that the Prime Minister was treated to the sight of a tiger, the SPG was firm in not allowing any deviation from the predetermined route, sources added.

Bandipur safari has been out of bounds for the public since April 6. The security apparatus had taken over the tiger reserve and even homestays and resorts were shut during the period.

Officials said sighting tigers was a matter of chance, which also depended on the timing and the season. Being summer, one could hope to catch a glimpse of the striped cats between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. or late in the evening. Mr. Modi's safari which began around 7.45 a.m. lasted for nearly two hours after which he left for Mudumalai.

Bandipur was one of the first nine national parks which were accorded the Project Tiger status in 1973 when the flagship conservation programme was launched. These reserve had 12 tigers then.

Conservation and protection ensured a steady increase in their numbers over the years. As per the Status of Tigers Co-predators and Prey in India, 2018, published by the National Tiger Conservation Authority, 173 tigers are utilising the park while 126 tigers live within the reserve.

> As I conclude a memorable visit to the Bandipur and Mudumalai Tiger Reserves, I want to acknowledge the hardwork of all forest officials, guards, tiger reserve frontline staff and everyone else working on tiger conservation. Words can't do justice to their passion and effort.
>
> **NARENDRA MODI**
> Prime Minister

CORRIDORS OF POWER

When an actor is stunned

Well-known Kannada actor 'Kichcha' Sudeep (*in picture*), who has faced the cameras since 1996, was stunned to see about a hundred TV news channel cameras and photographers on April 5, the day he announced that he would campaign for Chief Minister Basavarah Bommai (whom he referred to as "mama") and the ruling BJP in Karnataka.

Accompanied by Mr. Bommai, Ministers K. Sudhakar, R. Ashok and Munirathna, Mr. Sudeep, who won several awards for his performance in films and has been brand ambassador for many products, was clearly surprised. "I have not seen so many cameras during my film release functions. If you all turn up at my film promotion events, all films will be successful," he said, amidst a volley of questions from reporters from Kannada, English and Hindi TV news channels and print. It would be interesting to see how much crowd he attracts during the campaign and to what extent the BJP will benefit from the "star power."

No 'guarantees' to MLAs

The Congress has given four major "guarantees" to voters ahead of elections, including a monthly allowance of ₹2,000 to nearly 1.5 crore women under the Grih Lakshmi scheme and 200 units of electricity free under the Grih Jyoti scheme. But there is no guarantee of ticket to incumbent MLAs of the party. As five MLAs found their names missing from the two lists announced so far, they rushed to the residence of Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah to know their chances of getting ticket. In fact, MLA R. Akhanda Srinivasamurthy, who won the highest number of votes (more than 80,000) from Pulakeshinagar in Bengaluru City, was among those disappointed.

Besides Mr. Srinivasamurthy (Pulakeshinagar), four other MLAs S. Ramappa (Harihara), Kusuma Shivalli (Kundagol), V. Muniyappa (Sidlaghatta) and D.S. Hoolageri (Lingsugur) did not find their names in the list. Meanwhile, Congress leader D.K. Shivakumar said the party has not guaranteed ticket to anyone. "We have decided the ticket based on our survey reports," he said. Will these MLAs remain in the party if they did not find their names in the subsequent lists is the moot question.

Is blood thicker than water?

Congress has chosen Mahantesh Kadadi, a young doctor from Mudalagi, as its candidate in Gokak, a seat held by Ramesh Jarkiholi, former Minister and BJP leader. Interestingly, BJP Rajya Sabha member Iranna Kadadi had urged the BJP parliamentary committee to nominate his nephew, Mr. Mahantesh Kadadi, from Gokak, a seat held by former Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi. His argument was that BJP should nominate general category candidates from unreserved seats and allow SC/ST candidates to fight from seats reserved for SC/STs. However, as the BJP could not consider this for obvious reasons, Mr. Mahantesh Kadadi began exploring his options in the Congress. Some leaders in the district unit of the BJP are raising the question as to whether blood would prove thicker than water for Mr. Iranna Kadadi.

Nagesh Prabhu
Rishikesh Bahadur Desai

'People need 100% committed government and not 40% commission government'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Stating that the Congress passionately believes Karnataka Assembly elections are winnable, former Union Minister and Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Sunday said people need a 100% committed government and not a 40% commission government.

Member of the Lok Sabha Shashi Tharoor during a press meet at the KPCC office in Bengaluru on Sunday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

"Unfortunately, over four years, there has been bad governance in Karnataka, and essential needs of people are not being met. Infrastructure of Bengaluru that once was a pride of India is now an embarrassment. The Global livability index that ranked Bengaluru as most livable city is now rating Bengaluru as least livable city. State level or urban level governance has serious deficiency," he told reporters here.

When asked if Congress president M. Mallikarjun Kharge is in the race for Chief Minister's post, he said: "He is a respected party president and we are giving full support. Congress has the tradition of not discussing chief ministerial candidate till the elections are over. It is a healthy practise because focus is on winning."

On the competition between former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar, he said: "Both of them have clarified that they are united. Truth is that it is entirely normal to have political aspirations. Let's not be surprised. In the past, one person has become Chief minister and things have moved on."

Mr. Tharoor said that besides the local issues that will be raised during elections, national issues are going to come up. They included national security, crony capitalism and Rahul Gandhi's disqualification, he added.

The former Minister said that he was disappointed with a couple of Congressmen joining the BJP. "I know them to be secular-minded individuals and I don't think they will find it to be welcoming in a party that is fundamentally committed to a communal agenda. I think they have made a mistake."

Stating that every individual has the right to pursue their own political dream, he said: "I have a problem when people go to an ideology that is opposite to what they have always practised or believed in. They will sadly have to repent their choice on how they are treated in their new home."

Pointing out that Mr. Rahul Gandhi's disqualification had provoked remarkable degree of unity among the Opposition parties, he said that the BJP has created a good ground to bring opposition together. "Search for common ground of the maximum number of issues is possible. Areas of common ground has to be explored and agreed first," he said on the Opposition's unity for general elections.

B.N. Chandrappa is new KPCC working chief

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Ahead of the Assembly elections, the Congress on Sunday appointed B.N. Chandrappa, former MP, as KPCC working president in place of former MP R. Dhruvanarayan, who passed away recently. Mr. Chandrappa, who had represented Chitradurga in the Lok Sabha earlier, was the party vice-president before his new appointment.

B.N. Chandrappa

The appointment comes at a time when the Congress is trying to woo the Scheduled Caste (Left) community, which is perceived to be backing the ruling BJP. The SC (Left) population is significantly high in Tumakuru, Chitradurga, Haveri, Davangere, Koppal, and Raichur districts.

As many as 101 Scheduled Castes in Karnataka are officially notified. According to the government there are four major castes in Scheduled Caste (Right-Madigas), five major castes in Scheduled Caste (Left-Holeyas), four "touchable" castes, and 88 other castes.

Party sources said that the appointment came as a balancing factor since Congress president M. Mallikarjun Kharge, KPCC communications head Priyank Kharge, and manifesto committee chairman G. Parameshwara represent the Scheduled Caste (Right), besides the late Dhruvanarayan. The Scheduled Caste (Right) is perceived to be backing the Congress, and the community is spread across the Old Mysore region, and a few districts in the Kalyana Karnataka region.

"Scheduled Caste (Left) forms a big chunk of votes in the central region and some districts in Kalyana Karnataka and their support is crucial. Since almost all the important posts given to Scheduled Castes were from Right, Mr. Chandrappa was appointed to balance the caste equations among the Scheduled Caste voters," party sources said. "The appointment is crucial for raising the issue of internal reservation cleared by the BJP that have been opposed by many sections among Scheduled Castes," sources said.

BJP Central election panel to announce first list of candidates either today or tomorrow

The list is likely to include candidates for 120-150 seats; though there was speculation that many incumbent MLAs will be denied ticket, sources say there will be no such exercise on a large scale. Candidates can begin to file nominations from April 13

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After two days of hectic parleys to decide on party's candidates in the upcoming Assembly polls in Karnataka, BJP Central Election Committee met in New Delhi on Sunday and reportedly almost finalised the first list of candidates.

Party sources said the first list, likely to include candidates for 120-150 seats, will be announced either on Monday or on Tuesday. Candidates can begin to file nominations from April 13 and the last date is April 20.

"There is confusion over a few seats. We will have one more round of discussions on Monday. The first list will be released either on Monday or Tuesday," Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai told reporters in Delhi after the meeting late on Sunday night.

Right path: Narendra Modi speaking during the CEC meeting, with J.P. Nadda (right) and Amit Shah (left), in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI

Mr. Bommai and former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa reached New Delhi on Friday and has since then been huddled with Central leadership, including party president J.P. Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The Chief Minister did not even return to the State, even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in the State on Saturday night and Sunday.

Though there were speculations that "Gujarat model" will be implemented and a lot of incumbent MLAs will be denied ticket, there will be no such exercise on a large scale, sources said. Barring a handful of them, most of the incumbents will get party ticket, multiple party sources said.

Mr. Yediyurappa, S.A. Ravindranath, Haladi Srinivas Shetty, who have announced retirement, Madal Virupakshappa and Nehru Olekar caught in corruption scandals, and N.Y. Gopalkrishna, who has defected to Congress will not get ticket, party sources said. Apart from this, only a few of the incumbents may lose ticket, sources said. Party seniors Jagadish Shettar and K.S. Eshwarappa will likely get ticket, sources said.

Fearing open rebellion

While the list was approved by the BJP CEC on Sunday evening, the party withheld the announcement for a day fearing open rebellion within its ranks by aspirants who did not make it.

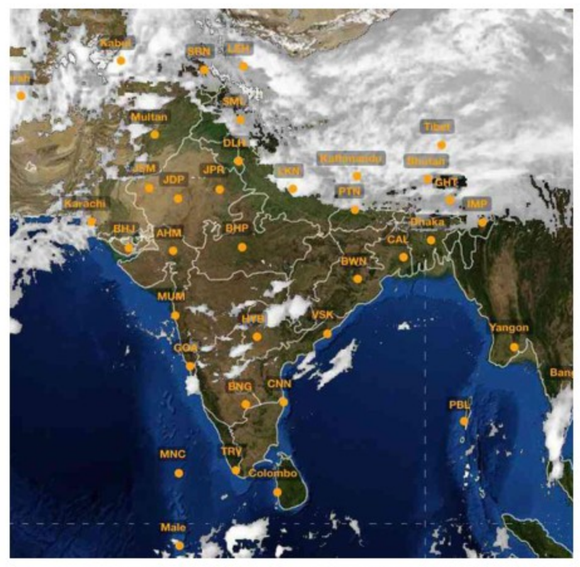
"In each region, a leader has been assigned to reach out to aspirants who did not make it and ensure there is no open rebellion. The list will be announced after this exercise," a senior party functionary said.

Though the party is facing anti-incumbency and a history where no incumbent dispensation has been reelected to power in the State since 1985, the party's central leadership is keen on fighting the elections to the finish and want to ensure nothing rocks the boat. This has prompted them to go ahead with most of the incumbents and placate all possible rebels before the list is announced, sources said.

"This is a departure from how this high command usually functions. This shows that they are leaving no stone unturned to win this election and are accommodating the State's peculiarities and needs," a senior leader said.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning & gusty wind (30-40 kmph) likely at isolated places over Kerala, Mahe and with lightning over Odisha

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	37.0	20.8	Kozhikode	—	36.2	27.4
Ahmedabad	—	39.1	24.0	Kurnool	—	39.0	25.1
Aizawl	—	—	14.0	Lucknow	—	35.9	20.7
Allahabad	—	38.0	22.2	Madurai	—	36.6	25.1
Bengaluru	—	34.5	20.5	Mangaluru	—	34.4	24.5
Bhopal	—	—	20.5	Mumbai	—	34.8	26.2
Bhubaneswar	—	37.2	23.5	Mysuru	—	35.5	24.4
Chandigarh	—	33.7	15.9	New Delhi	—	35.0	15.0
Chennai	—	33.9	25.8	Patna	—	38.1	23.7
Coimbatore	—	35.0	23.2	Port Blair	—	32.9	25.6
Dehradun	—	32.9	15.6	Puducherry	—	34.4	—
Gangtok	—	20.9	12.9	Pune	—	37.0	21.5
Goa	—	36.0	24.8	Raipur	—	32.0	22.0
Guwahati	—	34.1	19.4	Ranchi	—	34.8	21.2
Hubballi	—	37.0	22.0	Shillong	—	24.7	12.4
Hyderabad	—	35.7	22.9	Shimla	—	22.0	11.0
Imphal	—	31.5	14.6	Srinagar	—	24.7	5.1
Jaipur	—	34.9	20.8	Thiruvananthapuram	—	34.6	25.6
Kochi	0.8	32.6	25.6	Tiruchi	—	36.5	24.4
Kohima	—	25.4	14.5	Vijayawada	—	37.0	24.4
Kolkata	—	37.0	27.0	Visakhapatnam	—	33.5	26.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	8	30	5	194	154	
Bengaluru	7	20	17	39	64	
Chennai	3	123	110	53	48	
Delhi	33	28	30	261	319	
Hyderabad	6	30	39	109	144	
Kolkata	15	14	50	93	115	
Lucknow	18	155	39	152	124	
Mumbai	23	72	76	205	125	
Pune	110	147	113	114	89	
Visakhapatnam	17	43	22	96	104	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Begusarai, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 334 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Damoh, Madhya Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 26

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Amul-KMF row: Political slugfest between BJP and Congress leaders continues

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amid clarification from the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) over merger with Amul, the political slugfest between the BJP and Congress continued on Sunday. While the BJP leaders, including Cooperation Minister S.T. Somashekar, refuted claims of merger, Congress continued to attack the BJP of attempting to weaken the State's cooperative milk federation.

"There is no proposal to merge KMF with Amul. At Gejjalgere in Mandya, Home Minister Amit Shah had spoken about cooperation between the cooperatives in terms of technology and marketing," the Minister told reporters here. Stating that KMF is capable enough to meet any cooperation, he said that it is impossible for any other organisation to compete with KMF and win.

"The State government is providing maximum support to the federation. Congress is only politicising the issue." Stating that the government was committed to protecting the State's dairy industry, BJP MLC N. Ravi Kumar said the Anti-cow Slaughter Act was brought for the same reason, and pointed out that it was the Opposition parties that voted against the Bill.

Meanwhile, former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that devotion to cow did not mean providing licence to beef exports. "The sale of Amul products should be respectfully withdrawn. While Nandini products have seen a decline since Mr. Amit Shah spoke of merger, Amul sales have increased," he said.

Former Union Minister Shashi Tharoor told the media that the sentiments of people with respect to Nandini has to be heard.

BJP leaders in Kerala visit Bishops' houses on Easter

Press Trust of India
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Senior BJP leaders visited the homes of various prominent Bishops in Kerala on Sunday, on the occasion of Easter, in what is being seen as a bid to forge close ties with the Christian community as part of its political strategy to woo minority communities ahead of the 2024 election.

The Opposition Congress in Kerala termed the BJP's visits to Bishops' homes as a "mockery" and said it indicated the saffron party's "double standards".

The visits also assume importance in the wake of veteran Congress leader A.K. Antony's son Anil joining the saffron party and Archbishop Pamplany's statement last month that if the Centre promised to increase the rubber procurement price to ₹300 per kg, BJP's dearth of an MP from Kerala would be addressed.

Nimesh Ved and Sanjay Dwivedi

How campus visits can help students

Exposure visits to college and university campuses play a crucial role in making students aware of worlds beyond the one they inhabit

Learning during the schooling years warrants moving beyond the conventional classroom set-up as well. This is all the more crucial in a society like ours that seldom invests time and thought towards expanding the child's horizons. Exposure visits can help meet this need by enabling learning in a non-formal and fun-filled environment.

Multi-day trips to mountainous and forested landscapes are, of course, a wonderful option. Financial and logistical challenges, however, ensure that these trips are out of bounds for most. Many schools are then left with the option of going out, with children, for some hours in and around their towns and cities. Some schools visit spaces like museums and events like book fairs. A few also visit banks and factories.

Free space

One option that we have explored during recent months and found to be of great use is visiting large education campuses. Most of these are safe and clean havens – islands of sorts amid the chaos of our towns. Many occupy large areas and are generously sprinkled with open spaces where one can rest for some time or do nothing. There are also paths where students can walk without hindrance. Some of these are dotted with food stalls that provide the kind of fare students prefer. All this put together allows us to focus on the interactions with students, as we walk and, more importantly, to give them space to just be and observe a new environment.

Exposure visits to these campuses could play a crucial role in making students aware of worlds beyond the ones they inhabit – worlds they can be a part of tomorrow.

Over multiple visits, we have realised that these campuses harbour far more potential as learning spaces than we had envisaged. Many are dotted with trees and students look upon these with awe, discuss names and characteristics of some species, and end up touching a few as well. Then there are the fire safety paraphernalia or the sports infrastructure that are far more elaborate than those at most schools. These walks on the campuses also make students aware of options for further academic engagements.

Examples

Each campus also has its distinctive features, which present opportunities for observations and interactions. For example, the Aligarh Muslim University and the Forest Research Institute at Dehra Dun are home to museums. The specimens on display – with their range and exclusivity - have few parallels. The Maharaja Sayajirao University at Vadodara houses architectural creations of very high quality, including the second-largest dome in the country. The signages at the Banaras Hindu University – some of the better ones in town – act as fodder for conversations on language, units and departments. The Sampoornanad Sanskrit University, Varanasi, boasts of a sundial, an Asokan pillar and arguably the best specimen of Gothic architecture in northern India. The Hyderabad University and the Osmania University campuses bear remnants of the landscape that the city was once associated with.

Many towns in India have these large campuses. A megapolis like Delhi, too, is home to the Jawaharlal Nehru University, the Indian Institute of Technology and Delhi University among others. Exposure visits to these campuses could play a crucial role in making students aware of worlds beyond the ones they inhabit – worlds they can be a part of tomorrow.

The writers are associated with a school in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

The Hindu EducationPlus Career fair

The Hindu EducationPlus is conducting the 20th edition of The Hindu EducationPlus Career Fair 2023 on April 15 and 16 from 10 am at the Chennai Trade Centre, Convention Hall.

An exhaustive fair will empower aspiring young minds to make informed career decisions and help them choose the right courses and colleges.

Top educational and financial institutions from across India will be present. Furthermore, career guidance sessions with domain experts will help people discuss their career plans.

For enquiries, contact: +91 90940 41021, 90030 77030, 99622 26550

The career fair is presented by SRM, associated partners are Crescent, Rajalakshmi Institute of Technology, VELS, Shankar IAS Academy and Banking partner: SBI

To register, bit.ly/THEPCC2023 or scan the QR code:

SCHOLARSHIPS

OakNorth STEM Scholarship Program 2022

It aims to provide financial support to meritorious and underprivileged girl students pursuing graduation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) subjects from government colleges/universities.

Eligibility: Girl students from Haryana who have passed Class 12 and are currently pursuing graduation (any year) in STEM-related subjects from government universities/colleges are eligible. The annual family income of the applicants must be less than INR 6 lakh from all sources. Applicants must have scored an aggregate of 60% marks or above in the Class 12 (or equivalent) examination. Students studying in the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year of STEM courses must score at least 60% in the previous class/semester.

Rewards: ₹30,000

Deadline: April 30

Application: Online b4s.in/plus/ONSS1

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

Draconian rules

New amendment rules on intermediary guidelines amount to censorship

With the advent of social media – the product of the evolution of the Internet into a sphere of communication that allows for relatively unfettered user-generated content – the problem of misinformation has taken a grotesque form. Express measures to curb misinformation, called "false news" and the somewhat inaccurate "fake news", are a must. However, this raises the question whether the Union government or its divisions can be the regulating entity. In the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2023, the Union government has added a provision of a fact-check unit to identify fake or false or misleading online content related to the government. Against such content identified by this unit, intermediaries, such as social media companies or net service providers, will have to take action or risk losing their "safe harbour" protections in Section 79 of the IT Act, which allows intermediaries to avoid liabilities for what third parties post on their websites. This is unacceptable and problematic. Also, Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000 elucidates the procedure to issue takedown orders, which these notified amendments could bypass. They also run afoul of *Shreya Singhal vs Union of India* (2015), a verdict with clear guidelines for blocking content.

Without a right to appeal or the allowance for judicial oversight, the government cannot sit on judgment on whether any information is "fake" or "false" as the power to do so can be misused to prevent questioning or scrutiny by media organisations. Takedown notices have been issued by the government for critical opinion or commentary on social media platforms, with several having to comply with them and only a few such as Twitter contesting them in courts. By threatening to remove a platform's immunity for content that is flagged by a government unit, it is clear that the Union government intends to create a "chilling effect" on the right to speech and expression on online platforms. To keep the establishment – which includes the executive government of the day – on its toes and to speak truth to power is a non-negotiable and salient role of journalism in a democracy. In India, freedom of the press is guaranteed through Article 19 of the Constitution, with media rights and public right to free speech derived from this Article. It stands to reason that any relationship between the government and the media should be one kept at arm's length, with the media having sufficient freedom. The government being the arbiter on what constitutes "false" or "fake" news and having the power to act upon platforms for publishing these will amount to draconian censorship.

Race to the bottom

Restricting journalists does not serve the interests of China or India

China's decision to "freeze" the visas of two Indian journalists, including *The Hindu*'s Beijing correspondent, has shown how journalists have unfortunately been dragged into rising geopolitical tensions between the neighbours. China's government, on April 6, 2023 said its decision was a response to India taking steps aimed at Chinese journalists. In 2017, China said, India had shortened the visas for India-based reporters to three months, down from the one year that is the norm in both countries. Then on March 31 this year, reports said, a Xinhua reporter was told to leave India. With Beijing's retaliatory move, there are only two Indian reporters in China, who have been warned of countermeasures if Chinese visas were not restored to one year validity. It is now entirely possible that there will be no reporters from the world's two largest countries covering the other – a most unfortunate development amid worsening relations. Restoring the access of journalists on the basis of reciprocity is not complex. Indeed, until 2016, reporters from both countries were on one-year visas and largely left to do their work. The troubles began that year, when three Xinhua reporters were expelled after visiting a Tibetan settlement without permission from the Home Affairs Ministry, which subsequently began placing all Chinese reporters on three-month visas.

India appears to increasingly be following the Chinese playbook by tightening scrutiny on foreign reporters in general. India has, as G-20 host, highlighted the strength of its democracy, but recent actions, including the government's over-the-top response to a BBC documentary, appear to show insecurity. While New Delhi is right to scrutinise non-journalistic activities of some Chinese reporters, restricting all of them will be counterproductive. On the spectrum of Chinese media coverage – largely negative on India – ground reports have been among the more multifaceted, showing sides of India that most Chinese usually do not get to see. Beijing, meanwhile, also stands to lose from its decision to restrict Indian media access. Last year's fake news of a coup in China, published in Indian websites, highlighted the absence of on-the-ground context. Moreover, if Beijing is now justifying its freezing of visas by pointing to reciprocity, it should be aware that reciprocity would also mean giving Indian organisations the kind of freedom that Chinese media enjoy in India. Even in the absence of Chinese employees, Xinhua and CGTN can continue to report with their Indian journalists. In contrast, Beijing bars foreign media organisations from hiring Chinese journalists except as assistants. In this race to the bottom, both sides stand to lose.

Awaiting lift-off into the Second Space Age

Rakesh Sood

is a former diplomat

The Space Age began in 1957 with the launch of satellite Sputnik 1, and in 1961, cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the world's first person in space. Neil Armstrong made history by walking on the moon in 1969. The First Space Age became reality.

Today, the Second Space Age is here. Though there is no precise date for its beginning, the contrast in today's space domain is stark. Between the 1950s to 1991, a period dominated by the Cold War, 60 to 120 space launches took place annually and 93% of these were by the United States and the erstwhile Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) governments. Three decades later, there are not only many more actors in the space scene, but a majority are also private companies. Last year, there were 180 rocket/space launches, 61 by Elon Musk's Space X; 90% of global space launches since 2020 are by and for the private sector.

India's space journey begins

India made a modest entry into the First Space Age in the 1960s. The first sounding rocket, a U.S. supplied Nike-Apache, was launched at Thumba (Kerala) in 1963 and in 1969, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was set up. It has come a long way since, with over 15,000 employees and an annual budget between ₹12,000 crore-₹14,000 crore in recent years. Through these decades, it has sought to prioritise societal objectives and benefits.

Its first major project was Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) that involved leasing a U.S. satellite in 1975-76 for educational outreach across 2,400 villages covering five million people. Satellite technology was a new mass communication tool. This led to the INSAT series in the 1980s, followed by GSAT, that provided the backbone for the country's tele-communication and broadcasting infrastructure.

This was followed by remote sensing capability development. The use of space-based imagery for weather forecasting, resource mapping of forests, analysing agricultural yields, groundwater and watersheds, gradually expanded to cover fisheries and urban management. Following the Indian Remote Sensing programme, this plan grew with the Oceansat and Cartosat series. The field of satellite-aided navigation emerged later. It began with GAGAN, a joint project between ISRO and the Airports Authority of India, to augment Global Positioning System (GPS) coverage of the region, to improve air traffic management over Indian airspace. This has now been expanded to a regional navigation satellite system called Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC).

In parallel came the development of satellite launch capabilities. Beginning with the SLV-1 in the 1980s, it took a decade before ISRO developed the PSLV series that has become its workhorse with over 50 successful launches.

India's modest entry into the First Space Age followed by its many gains should be used to help the country tap the vast potential in the Second Space Age

Space potential

The origins of the Second Space Age can be traced to the Internet. In India, the process began accelerating as the 1990s saw the emergence of private TV channels, together with cable TV followed by direct-to-home transmissions. The demand for satellite transponders and ground-based services exploded. Today, more than half the transponders beaming into Indian homes are on foreign satellites.

The last 15 years witnessed another transformation, and this time India was in lockstep with the developed world. The age of mobile telephony, followed by smartphones has shown the world what a data-hungry and data-rich society India is. Broadband, OTT and now 5G promise a double-digit annual growth in demand for satellite-based services.

In 2020, the global space economy was estimated at $450 billion, growing to $600 billion by 2025. The Indian space economy, estimated at $9.6 billion in 2020, is expected to be $13 billion by 2025. However, the potential is much greater with an enabling policy and regulatory environment. The Indian space industry could easily exceed $60 billion by 2030, directly creating more than two lakh jobs.

The reason is that in terms of the end-user revenue, only a fifth is generated by the government. Media and entertainment account for 26% of India's space economy, with consumer and retail services accounting for another 21%. In terms of space activities, downstream activities such as satellite services and associated ground segment are dominant, accounting for over 70% of India's space economy; upstream activities of satellite manufacturing and launch services contribute the smaller share. A similar trend can be seen in developed countries. The reason is that India has been an early adopter of digital app-based services.

The growing role of the private sector is also evident in the numbers and ownership of satellites. According to the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), there are 8,261 satellites in orbit, of which nearly 5,000 are active. Till 2010, about 60 to 100 satellites were launched annually. The pace has picked up in recent years. In 2020, 1,283 satellites were launched. Today, Starlink operates a constellation of over 3,500 satellites and has a million paying customers. Both Starlink and OneWeb (in which Airtel has a stake) project constellations of 40,000 satellites each. And Jeff Bezos of Amazon has launched Project Kuiper to bring low-latency broadband connectivity around the globe. How this domain will be regulated is a separate challenge, but this provides a glimpse of the scope of expansion.

Creating an enabling environment

The Indian private sector is responding to the demands of the Second Space Age. From less than a dozen space start-ups five years ago, there are over 100 today. The pace of investment is growing. From $3 million in 2018, it doubled in 2019 and crossed $65 million in 2021. The sector is poised for take-off – as a transformative growth multiplier like the IT industry did for the national economy in the 1990s.

Today, ISRO manages four to five launches annually. It manages 53 operational satellites - 21 for communication, 21 for earth observation, eight for navigation and the remaining as scientific experimental satellites (China operates 541). In addition, ISRO has missions such as Chandrayaan, Mangalyaan and Gaganyaan (manned space mission). ISRO has always been an open organisation that has worked closely with the Indian private sector. However, for some private sector companies, space technology-related work is a small part of their revenue stream. They were content as vendors, producing to defined specs and designs.

The start-ups are different. Their revenue stream depends on space-related activities and they need a different relationship with ISRO and government. ISRO today is the operator, user, service provider, licensor, rule maker and also an incubator. It has steered India through the First Space Age and needs to do what it can do best now within its resources and its high-quality manpower – research. To be fair, the government has been mulling over this. In 2017, the government introduced the first draft Space Activities Bill in Parliament but it lapsed in 2019. There has been talk of commercialising the PSLV and SSLV launch services and NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) was set up to replace Antrix. The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) was set up in 2020 as a single-window-clearance for the private sector. However, it is unclear whether it will emerge as the licensing authority or a regulator. An Indian Space Association (ISpA) was created as an industry association.

In recent years, a series of policy papers have been circulated for discussion – a satcom/telecom policy, an earth observation policy and a foreign direct investment policy. These have served a purpose. What is needed now is legislation (a space activities act). This provides the legal grounding that policy papers lack; help set up a regulatory authority and create an enabling environment for raising venture capital funding into the Indian space start-up industry. The window of opportunity for India to join the Second Space Age exists; it should not be lost.

Directing AI for better and smarter legislation

Mitul Jhaveri

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is attracting the attention of entrepreneurs, political leaders, and policymakers the world over. Most mature democracies are now using AI tools for better pieces of legislation and parliamentary procedures. For instance, AI tools can assist parliamentarians in preparing responses for legislators, enhancing research quality, obtaining information about any Bill, preparing briefs, providing information on particular House rules, legislative drafting, amendments, interventions, etc. They can also empower legislators to make informed decisions by having access to insights into citizen grievances, media opinions, and voices of citizen-centric associations.

Many obstacles

For AI to work in India, we first need to codify our laws. The challenges with current laws are they are opaque, complex and there is a huge translation gap between law-making, law-implementing and law-interpreting organisations. The Indian government has done well to set up the India Code portal, but it cannot be entirely relied upon as a 'single source of truth'. The interface should contain a complete chain, right from the parent Act to the subordinate pieces of legislation passed by the central government and the amendment notifications, enabling any entity to get a 360° view. Such a requirement becomes more critical in special situations such as COVID-19. For example, in measures related to COVID-19, the central government issued over 900 notifications while State governments issued over 6,000 notifications on the subject (Data as on September 20, 2020).

We need to make laws machine-consumable with a central law engine, which can be a single source of truth for all acts, subordinate pieces of legislation, gazettes, compliances, and regulations. For example, AI can tell us if an entrepreneur wants to open a manufacturing unit in Maharashtra and what acts and compliances are applicable. If a citizen wants to check the eligibility for welfare schemes, AI can recommend which schemes are eligible, based on details provided by citizens.

The momentum that the COVID-19 pandemic gave to a digitisation of services needs to be kept up and transferred to law, policy-making, and parliamentary activities

Assisting legislators

Compared to western democratic nations, in India, parliamentarians manage constituencies with a huge population. AI can analyse citizens' grievances and social media responses, and flag issues and priorities that need immediate attention. It can also assist parliamentarians in seeking citizen inputs for public consultation of laws and preparing a manifesto.

Many Parliaments across the world are now actively experimenting with AI-powered assistants. The House of Representatives in the United States has introduced an AI tool to automate the process of analysing differences between Bills, amendments and current laws. This is of immense help to legislative staff to readily see the impact of amendatory provisions in Bills that they move through the legislative process.

The Netherlands House of Representatives, for instance, has implemented the "Speech2Write" system which converts voice to text and also "translates" voice into written reports. As per the Inter-Parliamentary Union (an international organisation of national parliaments), "Speech2Write comprises automatic speech recognition and automated editing capabilities that can remove filler words, make grammatical corrections and propose editing decisions." Japan's AI tool assists in the preparation of responses for its legislature and also helps in the automatic selection of relevant highlights in parliamentary debates. Brazil has developed an AI system called Ulysses which supports transparency and citizen participation. The good news is that India is also innovating and working towards making parliamentary activities digital such as the 'One Nation, One Application' and the National e-Vidhan (NeVA) portal.

AI can also simulate the potential effects of laws. For example, various datasets such as the Census, data on household consumption, taxpayers, beneficiaries from various schemes, and public infrastructure can be modelled. In that case, AI can uncover potential outcomes of a policy. At the same time, it can also help in flagging laws that are outdated in the present circumstances and which require amendment. For example, we all saw how 'The Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897' failed to address the COVID-19 pandemic situation when the virus seemed to have overwhelmed the country. Not just this, many other provisions in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) are controversial and redundant. According to Article 309 (attempted suicide) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) continues to be a criminal offence. We have many pieces of criminal legislation that were enacted more than 100 years ago that are of hardly any use today. Some include the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, the Public Gambling Act, 1867, the Prisons Act, 1894, etc.

The COVID-19 pandemic has given a strong thrust to the Digital India initiative and a digitisation of services. This momentum needs to be kept up and utilised in the field of law, policy-making, and parliamentary activities, harnessing the power of AI. While doing all this, it needs to be ensured that the use of AI must be encouraged in an open, transparent, and citizen-friendly manner. AI is a powerful tool, but at the end of the day, we should be mindful of the fact that it is a means to an end and not an end in itself.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fragile Opposition unity

NCP supremo Sharad Pawar's defence of embattled industrialist Gautam Adani, and Mr. Pawar's preference to have a probe by a Supreme Court -appointed committee to probe the allegations against the business group will be music to the ears of the businessman and the government. While Mr. Pawar still emphasises the need for Opposition unity to take on the BJP in 2024 , it is doubtful whether genuine unity is possible with his open dissent with the Opposition on an issue that rocked the second leg of Parliament's Budget session.

S.K. Choudhury,
Bengaluru

The Opposition in India is facing an emergency situation, politically. Not a single party is in a position to give a tough fight to the formidable ruling party. The general election is just a year away. If there is no unity, the Opposition should get ready to give a standing ovation to the BJP.

Dr. D.V.G.Sankararao,
Nellimarla, Andhra Pradesh

NCERT revisions

There was a time when NCERT textbooks in all subjects had great repute among the teaching and student communities for their exhaustive and credible coverage of lessons (Page 1, April 9). That these books are now in the eye of controversy for being tweaked for possible political reasons is unfortunate. Rewriting history or blacking out the facts that fly in the face of dominant political narratives is futile.

S. Sanjeevi Rao,
Puducherry

Revisions of textbooks are done periodically only to update their contents and the syllabus. But a 'deliberate attempt' on the part of the NCERT to delete some portions of its textbooks based on the alleged whims and fancies of the ruling dispensation will only weaken the diverse social fabric.

The Mughal period in Indian history is a fact and students learning about the past must know this. How does this affect the ruling dispensation? Trying to rewrite history is a cheap political gimmick.

Kamil S.V.,
Androth island, Lakshadweep

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

Existing vaccines versus new COVID variants

Rajeev Jayadevan
is Co-Chairman, National IMA COVID Task Force and Past President, Indian Medical Association

As COVID-19 cases began rising yet again in India in March, many wondered whether the existing vaccines, based on the SARS-CoV-2 virus that was first reported in China, would still be effective against newer versions of the same virus. To answer this question, we need to look at a few basic principles of immunology.

Two-pronged response

Vaccines generate a two-pronged immune response. The first is the production of antibodies by B cells, a type of white blood cells. Antibodies directly attack and destroy viruses. The second is the T-cell response. T cells are another type of white blood cells. They have many roles, of which one is to patrol the body and destroy virus-infected cells. Both these arms also give rise to specialised memory cells, which are stored away for future needs.

These two commodities are 'freshly made' by our body following an encounter with the antigen, introduced during vaccination. Soon after vaccination, our antibody levels go up. This provides an early window of protection from infection. However, the levels of 'freshly made' antibodies start dropping within three months or so, and eventually plateau to a low baseline. This low level is not enough to prevent infection later.

Why do the levels drop? It is natural for the body to scale down the production of antibodies after the immediate threat has passed. If this immune contraction did not occur, our blood would be as thick as grease from all the antibodies produced against every pathogen we have encountered in our lives.

The gradual drop in the level of antibodies is one reason why people sometimes pick up infections despite vaccination – this can occur even after receiving multiple booster doses. For instance, in an early analysis of the XBB.1.16 variant in Pune, India, 26% of the people had already received a third dose.

The other reason is that the virus has altered itself, and some of the older antibodies are not able to lock on to the new targets. It is not feasible to repeatedly give vaccine doses to everyone in the hope that these antibody levels can be kept high. It is hard to imagine taking a vaccine shot every four-six months. Besides, there is evidence of a plateauing of the T-cell immune response after repeated vaccine doses. Recent research on the latest variants such as XBB.1.5 shows almost no neutralising activity in the blood six months after a booster dose.

It is logical to think of updating the first-generation vaccines using parts derived from recent versions of the virus such as Omicron. Unfortunately, the real-world performance of updated bivalent mRNA boosters has not matched the expectations generated by early laboratory studies.

To understand how antibodies work, it helps to look at the barcode on a shampoo bottle at a supermarket. The shampoo is the antigen, while the scanner at the checkout is the antibody. The scanner (antibody) recognises the shampoo (antigen) because of the barcode (epitope). Even a tiny alteration in the barcode would mean that the bottle of shampoo will fail to be scanned or recognised. The virus is constantly altering the epitopes targeted by antibodies. This immune escape is the reason why new versions of Omicron like XBB.1.16 can easily infect someone who was infected not too long ago by earlier versions such as BA.2 and BA.5. Likewise, a T-cell epitope is a specific part (barcode) of the virus protein that is recognised by our T cells. Unlike antibodies that identify large targets, T cells target much smaller epitopes located all over the virus, about 15-20 of them, each one being only eight to 15 amino acids in length. To alter a T-cell epitope is not an easy task for the virus, because there are about 3,800 base pairs on the spike alone, and about 30,000 for the whole virus.

As each T-cell epitope is of short length, mutations created by the virus are far too few to change all the epitopes on it. If the virus was a book, antibodies look at a whole chapter; T cells look at a single sentence. If we change a few words in the book, a few chapters may look different, but single sentences are unlikely to be altered. Besides, individual HLA differences ensure that each person chooses a slightly different set of T-cell epitopes from a large menu provided by the virus. This essentially means that the virus cannot fool everyone all at once.

T cells to the rescue

In other words, the second arm of our immune response remains effective even against an altered form of this virus. It is worth noting that T cells do not stop infection; they can only work on viruses that have already entered the cells. Their job is to search, find and destroy virus-infected cells, each one of which will otherwise release hundreds or thousands of virus copies. By doing this, the spread of the virus within the body can be halted an organ damage can be limited. As a result, vaccinated people are less likely to die even if they got infected afterwards. Recent research has confirmed that T-memory cells remain active beyond two years; the upper limit is not known yet. They will rise to the occasion if and when future infections occur. An easy way to remember this basic immunology is that antibodies are effective before the virus enters our cells, while T cells come to our rescue after the virus infects our cells. To simplify this further, so far the virus has been able to trick the first arm of our immune response (antibodies), but not the second.

A healthy person who has received a full dose of the vaccine will have long-term memory generated in both the T-cell and B-cell compartments. Thus, it does not seem necessary or feasible to make a vaccine for every new sub-lineage that comes along.

It does not seem necessary to make a vaccine for every new sub-lineage as the virus has, so far, been able to trick the first arm of our immune response but not the second

Fact, fiction, and nomenclature

The history of Hyderabad is set to be more contested as elections draw closer

STATE OF PLAY

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While a new controversy is raging in Karnataka about Tipu Sultan, contested claims are being made on the borders of Telangana too.

Speaking in a village of Bidar district on March 26, Home Minister Amit Shah said that there was 'hesitation' on the part of the Telangana government to celebrate Hyderabad Liberation Day. The next day, the Telangana government's social media team cited media reports to contest Mr. Shah's claim. Information Technology Minister K.T. Rama Rao said that the Telangana government had celebrated Telangana National Integration Day on September 17 last year. He tweeted: "To those who ask why can't we call it Liberation Day; Why do we celebrate 15th August as Independence Day and not as Liberation Day? What should matter is respectful commemoration of the sacrifices & struggles against oppressors; be it the British or Nizam (sic)."

The controversy brings to light the fraught history of the Hyderabad region. Mr. Shah's speech indicates that the stakes are high for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in both the southern States. The Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) was quick to respond to the Home Minister's claims as it is seeking to expand its footprint beyond Telangana and want to guard their turf in the State.

When Mr. Shah spoke at Gorta B village in Karnataka, he shared the dais with Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay and MLA Etala Rajender. Raichur, Bidar and Gulbarga are the three districts in Karnataka which were part of the erstwhile Nizam's Dominion. The end of Nizam's rule in the region and its aftermath was one of the most traumatic events in the history of the region.

This is the area that bore the brunt of the violence unleashed by the Razakars, the volunteers of the Majlis e-Ittehadul Muslimeen party which backed the Nizam in the days preceding Operation Polo, the military action to integrate Hyderabad with India. In Gorta B village, where Mr. Shah spoke, more than 100 people were killed, most of them Hindus, according to eyewitness accounts shared with journalists. There was terror in the region again when soldiers of the Indian Army defeated the Nizam's Army in a 109-hour war. Most of the civilians killed were Muslims.

The Confidential Notes of the Sunderlal Committee Report that investigated the aftermath of the merger of Hyderabad into India makes for grim reading. "The total number of people killed in Gulbarga district must have been between 5,000 and 8,000... The district of Bidar fared at least as ill as if not worse than Gulbarga," it states. The violence in the region before and after the day of merger on September 17, 1948, was noted by the mandarins in Delhi. K.M. Munshi, India's Agent-General in Hyderabad, and other Congressmen released a stream of information about the ground reality that crystallised Indian Army action. Once the Nizam's forces surrendered, there was a sigh of relief at the upper echelons of the polity. There was no triumphalism. Privately, there was a sigh of relief that the Hyderabad action did not trigger communal conflagration across India.

"With our success in Hyderabad, we have removed one great source of potential mischief in the communal sphere," wrote the then Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, in a letter. A similar sentiment was expressed by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru: "Recently, events in Hyderabad have not only gone a long way to solve our Hyderabad problem but have also had a most beneficial result in the whole situation in India. The communal situation has improved tremendously."

Many of the actions of the then government fighting a ghost war in Kashmir were dictated by realpolitik, an understanding of social and communal dynamics, and facts on the ground. But the perceptions of the people in the three different regions of the Nizam's Dominion were different. In the districts in Maharashtra, citizens began celebrating Marathwada Mukti Sangram. In the three districts of Karnataka, they celebrated Kalyana Karnataka Liberation Day. In contrast, the event was marked in a muted manner in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh and later in Telangana. Only the communist parties that were part of the Telangana armed struggle celebrated the day, not the state machinery. Last year, the Telangana government celebrated Telangana National Integration Day.

This contested history will only get more fraught as Telangana begins to prepare for elections.

The grip of the bipolar system in Tamil Nadu

Political parties that have projected themselves as credible alternatives to the DMK and the AIADMK have not been able to sustain their campaign for long

DATA POINT

T. Ramakrishnan

Though the Congress, an ally of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu, won the recent byelection to the Erode (East) Assembly constituency, the contest was still seen as one that was primarily between the ruling DMK and the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). There has been talk that the AIADMK is weakening, especially after the death of Jayalalithaa, but the party does not seem to have lost its strength completely. The two Dravidian parties have been, and continue to be, the primary players in elections ever since the AIADMK emerged as a main player in the 1973 Dindigul Lok Sabha byelection.

Between the 1977 and 2021 Assembly polls, the two parties together accounted for about 60% of the vote share. In 2016 and 2021, their combined vote share rose to more than 70%. A possible reason for this could be that they were contesting from a higher number of seats compared to the past. Only in 1977 and 2006 was their vote share less than 60%. Contrary to the perception in some circles that the DMK and AIADMK's allies depend on them for survival, election data underscores the fact that the allies are useful to the two majors. The collective vote share of the allies was 32% in 1980 and 30% in 2011. Other than these two years, on six occasions, the vote share of the allies was between 28% (1984) and 14% (2021). Only on three elections (1977, 1989 and 2016) was the vote share in single digits. A stronger and cohesive alliance ensured that the dominant party captured or retained power, as was seen in 1984, 2001, 2006 and 2021.

Despite the Dravidian majors getting adequate help from their allies on many occasions, the general impression is that they are invincible in Tamil Nadu. This is one of the key reasons why no third force has been able to emerge in the State. While it could be argued that the first-past-the-post system does not permit more than two effective contestants, that does not mean that there cannot be any alternative force. Till the AIADMK became a principal player, the space of the principal Opposition party was occupied by the Congress (Organisation). In Andhra Pradesh, the Congress has been swiftly replaced by the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), which is now the ruling party in the State. The YSRCP's ascent to power dispelled initial doubts about its ability to take on the two established players in the State. The Aam Aadmi Party too has become a principal player in Delhi and Punjab by upsetting the bipolar system.

Attempts to end dominance

In Tamil Nadu, over the last 45 years or so, many parties have attempted to end the dominance of the two major parties. In 1977, the Congress and the Janata contested alone, bagging 17.51% (27 Assembly seats) and 16.66% (10 Assembly seats) of the votes polled, respectively. Yet, they could not build on their vote base. Twelve years later, the Congress made a serious attempt to capture power and the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited the State often. Yet, the party obtained a vote share of 19.83% with 26 seats.

In 1996, the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) tried to present itself as a third alternative by stitching an alliance with the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Janata Dal. The MDMK could not win a single seat and its two allies won only one seat each. The coalition's vote share was 7.9%. There were two other smaller formations - the BJP, and the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK)-Congress (Tiwari) - which were in the fray independently and fetched 6.4%. In the election which was otherwise regarded as an anti-Jayalalithaa verdict, around 16% of the votes went to non-AIADMK and non-DMK forces. Ten years later, the Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK), contesting alone, got 8.38% with one seat. At that time, there was public curiosity when a group of IIT alumni came together to form the Lok Paritran party and contested in seven constituencies. In 2016, there were four formations – PMK, BJP, People's Welfare Front and the Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) – which tried their luck independently and polled, together, a little over 15%.

Even in 2021, when most of the smaller parties got accommodated in either of the fronts led by the DMK and the AIADMK, 11.5% of the votes went collectively to the NTK and coalitions led by the Makaal Needhi Maiam (MNM) and the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK). A post-poll survey by Lokniti-CSDS revealed then that 55% of the surveyed voters agreed with the idea of a political alternative to the two dominant fronts.

It is a fact that there is a yearning for a strong alternative force. But the parties that have projected themselves as credible alternatives to the DMK and the AIADMK have not been able to sustain their campaign for long, and have invariably aligned with either of the two majors. So far, the only exception has been the NTK, which contested two Assembly elections independently. The DMK and AIADMK also woo the parties that can make a difference to their electoral prospects. Even though both of them no longer have the benefit of the charisma of their leaders, the other parties find it difficult to match their organisational network and ability to mop up resources. The State president of the BJP, K. Annamalai, has been aggressively seeking to present his party as a principal alternative. He is not unaware of the shortcomings of his party in the State, but the one factor that could help him is that the BJP is in power at the Centre.

Two-party stronghold

The charts are based on data collated from the Election Commission of India and the Tamil Nadu Assembly records

Year	Votes & vote share (DMK)	Votes & vote share (AIADMK)	Individual vote share of coalitions	Combined vote %	Vote % of the fronts	Ally share
1977	42,58,771 (24.89%)	51,94,876 (30.37%)	DMK+: 24.89%, AIADMK+: 33.2%	55.3%	58.1%	2.8%
1980	41,64,389 (22.10%)	73,03,010 (38.75%)	DMK+: 44.4%, AIADMK+: 48.6%	60.9%	93.0%	32.2%
1984	63,96,518 (29.49%)	80,44,273 (37.09%)	DMK+: 39.75%, AIADMK+: 54.54%	66.6%	94.3%	27.7%
1989	80,39,155 (33.34%)	JL: 52,81,454 (21.9%) JR: 22,02,497 (9.13%)	DMK+: 38.04%, AIADMK+ :: JL+: 23.12%, JR+: 9.13%	64.4%	70.4%	6.0%
1991	55,35,708 (22.34%)	1,09,40,866 (44.39%)	DMK+: 29.67%, AIADMK+: 59.8%	66.7%	89.5%	22.8%
1996	1,14,23,380 (42.07%)	58,31,383 (21.47%)	DMK+: 53.77%, AIADMK+: 27.1%	63.5%	80.9%	17.3%
2001	86,69,864 (30.9%)	88,15,387 (31.4%)	DMK+: 38.7%, AIADMK+: 50%	62.3%	88.7%	26.4%
2006	87,28,716 (26.46%)	1,07,68,559 (32.64%)	DMK+: 44.73%, AIADMK+: 40.06%	59.1%	84.8%	25.7%
2011	82,49,991 (22.39%)	1,41,50,289 (38.4%)	DMK+: 39.43%, AIADMK+: 51.79%	60.8%	91.2%	30.4%
2016	1,38,08,011 (31.6%)	1,78,05,696 (40.8%)	DMK+: 39.66%, AIADMK+: 40.8%	72.4%	80.5%	8.1%
2021	1,74,30,179 (37.7%)	1,53,91,055 (33.29%)	DMK+: 45.4%, AIADMK+: 39.7%	71.0%	85.1%	14.1%

Note: All figures are approximate. In 1989, the votes polled by two factions of the AIADMK have been taken into account. while calculating the combined vote share of the DMK and the AIADMK for the year

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FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 10, 1973

Beas waters will be impounded this year

New Delhi, April 9: The Irrigation and Power Minister, Dr. K.L. Rao to-day announced in the Lok Sabha that the waters of the Beas river would be impounded during the coming monsoon with the completion of the Pong Dam in Himachal Pradesh. Replying to a call attention notive given by Mr. Virbhadra Singh and three others, Dr. Rao said the completion of the dam would enable utilisation of the bulk of the monsoon waters of the River Beas which were so far running to Pakistan. The Mangla Dam in Pakistan and the Pong Dam in India were both started at the same time. While Pakistan had completed the Mangla project six years ago and enjoyed the benefits, India was yet to utilise the Beas waters, Dr. Rao said. During the discussion, the Congress members from Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan exhibited their frayed tempers. The Rajasthan members, Mr. Virbhadra Singh, Mr. Partap Singh, Mr. Vikram Mahajan and Mr. Narain Chand Parashar blamed the Irrigation and Power Minister for not honouring his earlier assurance that the waters would not be impounded until all the families affected by the dam were resettled. The members from Rajasthan, including Mr. M.C. Daga said it was wrong to create an impression that the Rajasthan Government had not given lands for rehabilitation in the Rajasthan canal area. Dr. Rao maintained that he was not backing out from his assurance. What he needed was the cooperation from the families to be rehabilitated.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 10, 1923

Indians in Tanganyika

London, April 9: The Colonial Office throws light on the sections of Indians of Tanganyika who have closed their shops completely and ceased business as a protest against the recent ordinances dealing with the profits tax, trade licenses and pedlars' licenses which apply equally to all businessmen irrespective of race. The Colonial Office denies however there has been disorder and the Governor of Tanganyika in a despatch anticipates that the Indian action will not be prolonged in view of the fact that it is not backed up by Europeans including Italians, Greeks or Goanese. New legislation does not impose new trade disabilities and is merely designed to replace the former Germans laws.

From Page One

India's tiger population tops 3,000: census

For instance, in 2018, the tiger population was a minimum of 2,603 and a maximum 3,346 with a mean value of 2,967.

The current estimate also does not give numbers on the proportion of tigers outside protected areas, which are a growing number and a key marker of the environmental threats as well as man-animal conflicts. However, the authors of the census report warn that nearly all of the five major tiger-zones face challenges to the growth of the tiger population due to the increasing demands from infrastructure development.

Since 1973, when Project Tiger was established, the number of dedicated tiger reserves has grown from nine reserves covering 18,278 square km to 53 reserves spanning 75,796 square km, which is roughly 2.3% of India's land area. However, experts have said that most of the country's tigers are focused within a handful of reserves which are fast approaching their peak carrying capacity, and unless new regions are developed as reserves, it may be a challenge to ensure further growth in numbers.

Following the translocation of cheetahs from Africa, India is now looking at international initiatives to translocate tigers into other locations. It is in talks with Cambodia, where the tiger has gone extinct due to poaching, to create a suitable habitat there and ship a few tigers from India to revive the big cat's population in that country.

IIT-B Dalit student's death: batchmate held

Solanki and Mr. Khatri stayed on the same floor of a hostel of the premier institution and were batchmates. According to the investigators, the duo had had a dispute over Mr. Khatri's alleged comments about a religious community. The police said that Mr. Khatri was arrested on the basis of the note and was not cooperating with the interrogation. On hearing about the arrest, the victim's father, Rameshbhai Solanki, said that the family was only hoping for a just inquiry. Mr. Rameshbhai added that the family always maintained that they wanted a thorough investigation into the systemic caste-based discrimination faced by his son.

Telecom authorities block 120 sender IDs

Another official added that the scam was going on for at least three years and it was only recently that the officials at I4C flagged the issue. "The IP addresses of all the headers that were blocked were traced to China," said the official.

Following the investigation done by I4C, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) wrote to telecom companies to respond within 30 days about active or dormant headers.

On February 16, to stop the misuse of headers and message templates, TRAI issued directions to Access Service Providers to reverify and block all un-registered headers and message templates in 30 days and 60 days respectively.

Parliament was informed last month that more than 15 lakh mobile numbers detected to have been issued on fraudulent credentials, have been disconnected by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).

The Centre has been trying to strengthen I4C that was started in 2020. The Threat Analytical Unit (TAU) of the I4C analyses the pattern of financial crimes and frauds and sends reports to central agencies such as the National Investigation Agency (NIA), Enforcement Directorate or State police forces.

India to bridge language gap with neighbours

Language experts feel that the second option is the better one as a proper cultural environment is needed to learn a language in its entirety. "To learn any language, a person has to be in that country. There are many aspects which one needs to learn, like expressions and proper pronunciation, which happen only in the correct environment," said Soma Ray, a former senior faculty member at the SFL who now teaches at St. Stephen's College in Delhi University.

She also emphasised the need for proper utilisation of trained language experts.

Growing demand

Experts also feel that the ICCR's list of languages needs to be expanded, with India seeing a boom in cultural and economic ties with other neighbouring countries as well.

Meeta Narain, a professor at the Centre for Russian Studies in Jawaharlal Nehru University, offered the example of medical tourism. "A large number of people are visiting India for treatment from countries like Turkey, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Maldives and there is an urgent need for a pool of translators and interpreters for facilitating their visits as well," she said.

Possibly recognising this, JNU will soon be starting a course in Pashto.

The ICCR said that after the rollout of the project this year, the possibility of expanding the current list of languages would be discussed.

Centre plans revamp of livestock insurance scheme to raise coverage

At present, less than 1% of the country's cattle population is insured; finding the yearly premium to be unaffordable for most farmers, the government is looking at reducing the rate and providing a subsidy for cattle rearers of SC/ST communities

A.M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

Pulled up recently by a Parliamentary Standing Committee for zero insurance coverage of livestock in 2022-23, the Centre is considering a comprehensive livestock insurance scheme modelled on the Prime Minister's Fasal Bima Yojana. The Union Animal Husbandry Ministry's move is to roll out the scheme ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha election. There are initial proposals to waive off premium for cattle rearers from Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities. At present, less than 1% of the country's cattle is insured and the average yearly premium is 4.5% of the insured amount.

The Animal Husbandry Ministry recently held a meeting with various insurance companies and other stakeholders on the matter. "Our effort is to reduce the premium so that more farmers enrol in the scheme," an official said, adding that a comprehensive livestock insurance will replace the present Livestock Insurance Scheme.

Poor coverage: The Parliamentary Standing Committee's report reveals that not even a single animal was insured during 2022-23, whereas during 2021-22, 1,74,061 animals were insured. FILE PHOTO

The scheme is functional in 100 districts of the country. The Centrally sponsored scheme is being managed by the respective State Livestock Development Boards.

Recently, the Animal Husbandry Ministry had told the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Animal Husbandry that farmers are often caught in the fight between State government officials and insurance companies. A report submitted to Parliament by the panel on Demands for Grants of the Ministry quoted an official, and said the Ministry prefers direct transfer of benefits to farmers' accounts.

The panel said in the report that not even a single animal was insured during 2022-23, whereas during 2021-22, 1,74,061 were insured.

"The Committee were informed of the hardships faced by the livestock owners in getting their livestock insured and also about the measures being taken to ease the process of livestock insurance. Expressing concern over no Insurance during 2022-23, the Committee recommended the Ministry to take effective steps so that the process of insurance of livestock is made easy for the beneficiaries. The Committee would also like the Department to explore the possibility of developing an App-based Livestock Insurance facility for livestock owners. The Committee would like to be apprised of the total progress made by the Department in this regard," the report added.

The official said high premium rate and general economic conditions of farmers are reasons for lower enrolment in such schemes. "The government considers subsidy on the premium paid by socially marginalised farmers from SC-ST communities," the official added.

In the meeting with insurance companies, the Centre stressed the importance of expanding the ambit of the scheme and decreasing the premium paid by the farmers.

During the lumpy skin disease pandemic, about two lakh cattle died. Farmers had demanded compensation from the government for the loss. Hence, the Centre's attempt is to keep the premium low and ensure maximum coverage of livestock.

"The coverage at present is very poor as most of the farmers are not in a position to pay premium. Some exquisite cattle breeds are insured by the breeders, but the government wants to insure more animals," the official added.

Several farmers' organisations had also demanded comprehensive livestock and crop insurance in the background of pandemics such as lumpy skin disease.

SC to hear today pleas on identification of minorities

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a batch of petitions seeking the identification of minorities at the State level.

A Bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Ahsanuddin Amanullah will take up for hearing the petitions raising various issues related to the identification of minorities, including challenging the constitutional validity of the National Minority Commission Act, 1992 and the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutes Act, 2004.

The pleas include the one filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay who has sought directions for framing guidelines for the identification of minorities at the State level, contending that Hindus are in a minority in as many as 10 States in the country.

On January 17, the top court had expressed displeasure over six States and Union Territories (UTs) – Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Lakshadweep, Rajasthan and Telangana – not submitting their comments to the Centre on the issue of identification of minorities at the State-level.

Cow slaughter issue planned to kill peace in U.P.: Akhilesh

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

Reacting sharply to the Agra cow slaughter incident, Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday demanded immediate action against the anti-social elements involved in the crime, and described it as a well-thought-out plan to spoil the communal harmony of the State by making false allegations against people of other communities on Ram Navami.

"According to the Uttar Pradesh Police, some anti-social elements committed the crime themselves and tried to spoil the harmony of the State by making false accusations against people of other communities on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami. They should be punished immediately," Mr. Yadav wrote on Twitter. He also suggested that policemen who honestly investigated the case need to be honoured.

One PoK intruder killed, two held with narcotics near LoC in J&K: Army

The Hindu Bureau
JAMMU

One intruder was killed and two were arrested after they crossed the Line of Control in Poonch district of the Pir Panjal valley, the Army said on Sunday.

"In the search operation so far, three bags with 14 packets of narcotics weighing approximately 17 kg, Pakistan currency, some documents and eatables have been recovered. During preliminary questioning, the two intruders apprehended alive claimed they are residents of Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir and belong to Maidan Mohalla, village Chanjal," Jammu-based Defence spokesman Lt. Col. Devender Anand said.

The Army said the infiltration bid was foiled around 10.15 p.m. by the alert troops deployed in the Poonch Sector, as they observed a suspicious movement of a group of three individuals close to the LoC.

Swift response: The Army said the infiltration bid was foiled around 10.15 p.m. by alert troops in the Poonch Sector. PTI

High alert

"Around midnight, the group crossed the LoC and started infiltrating on our side. The movement of the infiltrating group was under continuous observation. Around 2 a.m., the group approached the fence and the alert Indian Army troops challenged the infiltrators. The intruders started to run away, were engaged by fire, in which one intruder was shot dead, while the other two managed to run into the jungle taking advantage of the thick foliage and rocky outcrop," the Army said.

"As the search progressed in the jungle, one intruder was apprehended alive in wounded condition. In the subsequent search the third intruder was also apprehended alive," the Army added.

Chidambaram says 83% of MUDRA loans too small for business

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

As the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) completed eight years, senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram on Sunday said 83% of the loans given under the scheme were under ₹50,000, which left him wondering if any business could be done with such a meagre amount.

P. Chidambaram

Banks and financial institutions had sanctioned ₹23.2 lakh crore to over 40.82 crore beneficiaries under the MUDRA Yojana, launched to fund the unsponsored. The PMMY was launched in 2015 to facilitate easy collateral-free micro-credit of up to ₹10 lakh to non-corporate, non-farm small and micro-entrepreneurs, for income-generating activities.

In a tweet, Mr. Chidambaram said that under the scheme, ₹23.2 lakh crore had been given in the past eight years, which was "impressive" until you noticed that 83% of those loans were under ₹50,000. "That is ₹19,25,600 crore of loans have been given to borrowers at the rate of ₹50,000 or less. It leaves me wondering what kind of business can be done today with a loan of ₹50,000," he said.

Loans under PMMY are provided by Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) – banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), microfinance institutions (MFIs) and other financial intermediaries, the Finance Ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

U.P. urban body polls to be held on May 4 and 11

The Hindy Bureau
LUCKNOW

State Election Commissioner Manoj Kumar on Sunday announced at a press conference that the urban local body polls would be held in two phases – on May 4 and 11 – while counting of votes will be done on May 13.

The elections would be held to 14,684 posts in U.P.– including 17 mayoral seats and 1,420 councillor posts. The elections are considered the semi-finals for political parties going into the 2024 Lok Sabha election in Uttar Pradesh.

Funding ramp-up on agenda as G-20 panel on bank reforms prepares to meet this week

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

The G-20 expert group on reforming multilateral development banks (MDB), jointly steered by Harvard University President Emeritus Lawrence Summers and Fifteenth Finance Commission Chairperson N.K. Singh, is slated to hold its first in-person meeting in Washington this week.

The group's mandate includes an evaluation of the scale of funding ramp-up needed for institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to be able to finance member countries' needs, with possible mechanisms to raise more funds from the private sector and coordinate more effectively among the different institutions.

Plans afoot: The IMF and World Bank's Board of Governors' spring meeting is scheduled in Washington this week. AFP

With the IMF and World Bank's Board of Governors' spring meeting scheduled in Washington this week, the G-20 group is also likely to interact with their leadership along with that of other multilateral development institutions in the coming week.

Incidentally, the World Bank's development committee has proposed an evolution plan to "dramatically scale up" its financing and impact at a time when the world is facing "an unprecedented confluence of crises". The World Bank's Board of Governors will consider the plan that stresses the need for urgent action by all stakeholders on April 12.

Mr. Singh, co-convener of the G-20 panel, whose report is due by June, said the challenge of raising financing is not unique to the World Bank but to all multilateral banks as member countries are reluctant to step up capital. "Each bank has its own structure and there are some focused on regional development so any convergence in the norms must recognise their different priorities," he told *The Hindu*.

Constituted in March under the aegis of India's G-20 Presidency, the expert group's mandate is to suggest a road map for rebooting the ecosystem of MDBs so they are better equipped to finance sustainable development goals and emerging global challenges like climate change and health.

Pilot raises Gehlot's hackles again, to fast for probe into Raje govt. deals

With just months left for Rajasthan Assembly election, he says that while an inquiry was promised, no action was taken; as fault lines in State Congress unit deepen, leadership in Delhi issue non-commital statement, without stating the context

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

With seven months to go for the Rajasthan Assembly election, there is fresh trouble for the Congress with former Deputy Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Sachin Pilot announcing a day-long fast seeking probe into the alleged corruption cases during the BJP rule, which the Ashok Gehlot government failed to undertake in over four years.

While making the announcement, Mr. Pilot asserted that every political party, to hold the electorate's confidence, had to provide evidence. "Action wasn't taken [by the Gehlot government] on corruption by the previous Vasundhara Raje government over the years. While in Opposition, we had promised that an inquiry would be conducted into the mines scam of ₹45,000 crore," Mr. Pilot said.

Breaking point: Congress leader Sachin Pilot addressing a press conference in Jaipur on Sunday. PTI

"With six or seven months left for the elections, the opponents can build a narrative that we colluded with them. Therefore, action will have to be taken soon so that the Congress workers feel that there is no difference between our words and actions," he said. Mr. Pilot said he would observe the day-long fast at Shaheed Smarak on April 11 to press for his demand.

This day-long hunger strike has to be seen in the context of the turmoil in the Rajasthan Congress that began with Mr. Pilot's rebellion in July 2020 against Mr. Gehlot. Mr. Pilot was the State unit president in 2018, at the time of the Congress's victory in the State and felt that he was the rightful claimant for the Chief Minister's post.

The party believed that it had found a solution to this festering problem, when it decided that Mr. Gehlot would contest the election for Congress president. But before filing his nomination, the high command expected him to resign from the Chief Minister's post paving the way for Mr. Pilot.

Mr. Gehlot outfoxed the Delhi leadership, when a section of party MLAs held a parallel meeting submitting their resignations rather than attending the official Congress Legislature Party meeting on September 25.

Asked what he would do if the government once again failed to take the crucial step of instituting investigations, Mr. Pilot said, "There is no reason why my demand won't be accepted. It is our [Congress] government, agencies work under us, the allegations against the BJP government is based on facts and we have made a public commitment towards the probe." Reacting to the announcement, the Congress leadership in Delhi issued a prosaic statement, without stating the context.

"The Congress government in Rajasthan with Ashok Gehlot as CM has implemented a large number of schemes and taken many new initiatives that have impacted the people profoundly. This has given the State a leadership position in governance in our country," the statement issued by party general secretary (organisation) Jairam Ramesh said. "Later in the year, the Congress will seek a renewed mandate from the people on the strength of these landmark achievements and the collective efforts of our organisation," it said.

The leadership's hopes of "collective efforts" from both sides look bleak for now, since Mr. Pilot did not leave any doubt that his hunger strike was aimed at Mr. Gehlot.

(With PTI inputs)

Cong. raises Adani Group's China links, asks why firm is allowed to operate ports

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Quoting old evidence, the Congress has launched a fresh attack on the Adani Group's alleged China links. The party asked why the Union government is making an exception for the Adani Group, allowing it to operate the ports in India, against its own policy to prevent Chinese firms and entities with Chinese connections from operating ports and terminals.

The party questions why the Centre is making an exception for the group, against its own policy

In a statement, Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh cited a June 2022 news report on security clearance denied to a consortium of APM Terminals Management and Taiwan's Wan Hai Lines, after agencies discovered a connection between a Wan Hai director and a Chinese firm.

This blocked the consortium's bid to operate a container handling terminal at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority.

Drawing a parallel between the news report, Mr. Ramesh flagged Chinese national Chang Chung-Ling's close association with the Adani Group.

Mr. Chang's son, the Congress leader said, owns PMC projects, a firm that has constructed ports, terminals, rail lines, power lines and other infrastructure assets for the Adani Group.

"The Adani Group and PMC were alleged to be involved in a ₹5,500-crore power equipment over-invoicing scam by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence," he said.

Mr. Ramesh also said the Adani Group had been known to have operated at least two Shanghai-based shipping companies, one of which was involved in the "illegal sale of petroleum products to a close China ally, North Korea".

'Security implications'

Against this backdrop, he questioned, "Given these close China links, why is the Adani Group being permitted to operate ports in India? Why is it being permitted to buy up port after port, in some cases after raids on previous owners, with no thought to the serious security implications?"

The Congress is attempting to sustain the campaign against the Modi government for allegedly extending undue benefit to Adani, especially in the face of divergent voices within the Opposition.

NCP chief Sharad Pawar had raised doubts about the U.S.-based short-seller Hindenburg Research, whose report on alleged malpractices by the Adani Group led to a complete washout of the Budget Session. He said the importance given to the report was "out of proportion".

Modi fulfilled dream of Balasaheb, Shinde says in Ayodhya

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday said that those who doubted if a Ram temple would come up in Ayodhya were shown their way home as the process has started and the work is on in full swing.

On his maiden visit to Ayodhya as Chief Minister, accompanied by BJP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, and hundreds of office-bearers, Mr. Shinde said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had fulfilled the dream of Shiv Sena founder 'Hindu *Hriday Samrat*' Balasaheb Thackeray and crores of Ram *bhakt*s.

In a veiled attack on Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray, Mr. Shinde said that "some people are not happy with the Ayodhya *Yatra*."

The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance criticised Mr. Shinde and other leaders for visiting Ayodhya while forgetting their "constitutional duty", especially when farmers in the State were suffering from crop losses due to unseasonal rain.

'Farmers in distress'

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) supremo and four-time Chief Minister Sharad Pawar lashed out at the Shinde-Fadnavis government for their visit, and said the farmers' community was god as it provided food.

"It is surprising that they have left the farmers in distress and have travelled to have *darshan* of Lord Ram," he said.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut criticised Mr. Fadnavis for accompanying Mr. Shinde to Ayodhya as the said party had never come with their party when they had visited the temple town in the past.

Mr. Raut also questioned the decision decision to visit Ayodhya despite the ongoing problems faced by farmers in Maharashtra due to rain. "Will Lord Ram bless them if they ignore farmers' problems in Maharashtra and stay there?" he asked.

Easter message

Festive spirit: Prime Minister Narendra Modi being felicitated by Archbishop Anil Joseph Thomas Couto during his visit to Sacred Heart Cathedral Catholic Church in New Delhi on Easter Sunday. ANI

Modi sent emissary to Sharif in 2017 to restart back-channel talks, says book

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Despite several setbacks to the India-Pakistan peace process, including the Pathankot attack and the trial against former Naval officer Kulbhushan Jadav on terrorism and espionage charges, the Narendra Modi government sent an emissary to restart the back-channel talks between the two countries in April 2017, a book by former special envoy Satinder Lambah says.

In addition, the Prime Minister's Office had "reviewed" the file on the previous back-channel process led by Mr. Lambah for over a decade, which nearly led to an agreement on the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf in 2007, concluding that "no major changes" would be required in taking the back-channel process forward between Mr. Modi and then Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif .

The revelations by Mr. Lambah, who passed away in June 2022, are contained in a book, *In Pursuit of Peace: India-Pakistan Relations Under Six Prime Ministers*, that will be launched this week in Delhi, and was completed before he died in June 2022. While it includes a first-person account of his earlier work as a diplomat and Special Envoy on India-Pakistan talks for over two decades in some detail, a two-page note has evinced much interest as it deals with events just a few years ago. Significantly, the book has been praised by National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval himself, whose comments are recorded at the beginning of the book, while a foreword has been written by Dr. Singh, both of which appear to verify the contents.

Satinder Lambah

"[Mr. Lambah's] authentic and objective narration will substantially contribute to serious historical study of bilateral relations between the two countries and also provide a rare insight for common readers," says Mr. Doval's blurb.

"The book also holds many lessons for future diplomats and policy makers who will have to deal with a difficult neighbour for a long time and will have a bearing on our national security," the blurb says.

According to Mr. Lambah's book, he met Mr. Modi twice in 2014 to discuss the back-channel talks (the book's first version erroneously refers to dates in 2016). "There appeared to be an intent to continue the back-channel process. The file [left by the UPA government] had been reviewed. I was even once told that no major change was required," he writes, indicating that the NDA government was prepared to look into past negotiations.

In the book, Mr. Lambah not only confirms the contours of the final draft agreement but also lists for the first time a 14-point list of guidelines under which it was prepared. While respecting the LoC "like a normal border" between the two States was the chief tenet of the peace agreement, there would be no redrawing of boundaries and no "joint sovereignty" over parts of Jammu and Kashmir. However, people on both sides of the LoC would be allowed to move freely and there would be trade without tariffs and non-tariff barriers, as long as there was an end to "violence, hostility and terrorism".

This is the first time an Indian official with first-hand knowledge has written about the agreement in a book.

In the book, Mr. Lambah says that he was approached on April 20, 2017 by a senior PMO official asking him to travel to Pakistan for a meeting with Mr. Sharif to discuss restarting the back-channel dialogue. Mr. Doval and Pakistan's NSA Lt. Gen. Nasir Khan Janjua (retd) had begun the dialogue at a December 2015 meeting in Bangkok, just prior to Mr. Modi's visit to Lahore, and continued to speak via telephone for several months until the Pathankot attack, Jadhav case, the Uri attacks and India's "surgical strikes" derailed the process by end-2016.

Shortly after he was approached by the official, Mr. Lambah writes that he learnt that an Indian businessman had met with Mr. Sharif, and informed the PMO that it would not be "proper" for two separate emissaries to go to Pakistan.

Mr. Sharif's daughter Maryam Nawaz had confirmed that Indian businessman Sajjan Jindal had met with the Pakistani PM in Murree. Just weeks later, Mr. Doval and Lt. Gen. Janjua picked up the process for talks, meeting on the sidelines of an international security summit in the Russian town of Zavidovo on May 25-26, 2017, and spoke and met several times after that in 2017, *The Hindu* had reported.

Assam CM vows to sue Rahul Gandhi for Adani link charge

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said he would file a defamation suit against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for accusing him of investing unaccounted-for money in industrialist Gautam Adani's firms.

Tweeting on Congress turncoats, Mr. Gandhi named the Assam Chief Minister and four others, including Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, of putting in a total of ₹20,000-crore *benami* money in Mr. Adani's companies.

"Rahul Gandhi's tweet is defamatory. Once Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns from Assam, we will respond to the tweet. Definitely, there will be a defamation case in Guwahati," Mr. Sarma said.

Mr. Modi is scheduled to visit Assam on April 14 to attend a Bihu function and inaugurate some projects.

Mr. Sarma also said he is waiting to "demystify" his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal's claim of having provided jobs to 12 lakh youth. "I am still waiting for the invitation from Kejriwal. I want to demystify how 12 lakh employments are possible when [the number of] sanctioned staff in the Delhi government is only 1.5 lakh," he told presspersons.

Himanta Biswa Sarma

During an AAP rally in Guwahati on April 2, Mr. Kejriwal said the Delhi government provided jobs to 12 lakh youth in seven or eight years. Mr. Sarma said the Assam government could not give jobs to 12 lakh people when it has 4 lakh sanctioned staff.

Cong. has to be fulcrum to build a strong alliance: Sibal

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Congress has to be at the centre of any coalition that will take on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, and all Opposition parties should be more mindful of sensitivities and be circumspect in criticising the ideologies of one another to build a strong alliance, Rajya Sabha member Kapil Sibal said on Sunday.

Mr. Sibal gave a clarion call to all parties opposed to the BJP-led government to find a common medium.

"Opposition unity will come about only when we have a broad consensus and a platform that elucidates broad issues of that consensus," he said.

He said the leadership question of a coalition need not be answered at this stage, and cited the example of 2004 when the Atal Bihari Vajpayee dispensation was voted out of power, despite the Opposition not having a declared face.

भारत सरकार - अंतरिक्ष विभाग / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA - DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
निर्माण एवं अनुरक्षण समूह, एसडीएससी-शार / CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP, SDSC-SHAR
श्रीहरिकोटा, आं.प्र. / SRIHARIKOTA - 524124

संक्षिप्त ई–निविदा सूचना / Brief E-TENDER NOTICE

ई–निविदा सूचना सं./e-Tender Notice No.CMG/C/W238701 तिथि/ Date. 03.04.2023

भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से "सतीश धवन अंतरिक्ष केंद्र शार के एलएन2 एवं एलओएफएस एससी, एएसएलपी परियोजना, एसएलपी के लिए विद्युत बाड़े (फेंसिंग) हेतु छोटी दीवार तथा आरसीसी पोस्टों का निर्माण"। (₹ 70 लाख); के लिए ई–निविदा के माध्यम से मद दर निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा दस्तावेज **21.04.2023** को **14:30** बजे तक डाउनलोड किए जा सकते हैं। विस्तृत सूचना हेतु इच्छुक निविदाकार हमारी वेबसाइट **www.isro.gov.in** या **www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO** पर जा सकते हैं।

On behalf of President of India, Item Rate tenders are invited through e-tendering for **"Construction of Dwarf Wall and RCC Posts for Power Fencing for LN2 & LOFS SC, ASLP Project, SLP, SDSC SHAR (Civil Works)"**. (₹ 70 Lakhs); Tender documents can be downloaded up to **21.04.2023**, **14:30 hrs**. Interested tenderers may visit **www.isro.gov.in** or **www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO** for details.

हस्ताक्षरित- समूह प्रधान, सीएमजी / एसडीएससी शार / Sd/- GROUP HEAD, CMG / SDSC SHAR

KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD
(DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOVT. OF KERALA)
Head Office : Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram-14,
(Telephone No. 0471-2945600, 2945646),
E-mail : oncocare@kmscl.kerala.gov.in,
website : www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in, CIN No. U24233KL2007SGC021616

No.KMSCL/OD/268/2022 Date : 03.04.2023

E-TENDER NOTICE

Online bids are invited from manufacturers/direct importers / loan licensees on behalf of Department of Health, Govt of Kerala for the procurement of Anti Cancer Drugs for the year 2023-24.

Sl. No.	Tender No. and Date	Category	No. of items
1.	KMSCL/OD/ACD/RC/2023/007 dtd. 04.04.2023	Anti Cancer Drugs	124

The last date and time of online uploading of tenders will be 06.05.2023, 5.00 pm. The date and time of opening of Technical bid will be 11.05.2023 11.00 am. Tenders shall be downloaded and submitted online through the e-tender portal **www.etenders.kerala.gov.in**.

(Sd/-) MANAGING DIRECTOR (Tender Inviting Authority)

INBRIEF

Nationwide drill from today to check COVID preparedness

Amid rising COVID-19 cases, a nationwide drill to take stock of hospital preparedness will be held on April 10 and 11 in which both public and private facilities are expected to participate. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will visit AIIMS, Jhajjar on April 10 to oversee the drill, officials said on Sunday. In a review meeting that was held on Friday, Mr. Mandaviya urged State Health Ministers to visit hospitals and oversee the drills. He stressed the need to identify emergency hotspots by monitoring trends of influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) cases, ramping up testing and vaccination, and ensuring readiness of hospital infrastructure. PTI

Right-wing activist arrested over hate speech in Gujarat

The Gujarat police on Sunday arrested right-wing activist Kajal Hindustani over the alleged hate speech which triggered communal clashes in Una during Ram Navami celebrations. Ms. 'Hindustani' surrendered before the police in Una on Sunday following which she was arrested and produced before a court which remanded her in judicial custody. On March 30, she had allegedly delivered a provocative speech at a Hindu community congregation organised by the VHP in Una in the presence of local BJP legislator K.C. Rathod. In the communal clashes that followed, two persons were injured and more than 50 people were arrested for rioting.

SAD leader Inder Iqbal Singh Atwal, brother join BJP

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Inder Iqbal Singh Atwal joined the BJP in New Delhi on Sunday in the presence of Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri. Mr. Atwal is the son of Charanjit Singh Atwal, who had been the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly. His younger brother Jasjeet Singh Atwal also joined the party. "If at all anyone is implementing the ideas of Babasaheb Ambedkar in the real sense, it is the Government of India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Mr. Atwal told presspersons. He also hailed the Prime Minister for reopening the Kartarpur corridor for Sikhs. PTI

'Polls to tribal village panels in Tripura deliberately delayed'

The TIPRA Motha (Tipraha Indigenous Peoples Regional Alliance) has alleged that the Tripura government is violating its "constitutional obligation" by deliberately delaying election to the village committees under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC). The party claimed that this "intentional delay has severely affected development and civic amenities" in hundreds of tribal villages. "It is very much frustrating that the State government is repeatedly ignoring calls to hold the election and we believe its actions are motivated," TIPRA Motha spokesperson and lawyer Anthony Debbarma told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

No scientific data to oppose same-sex marriage, says psychiatrists' body

Indian Psychiatric Society gathered scientific data from countries where same-sex marriage and adoption have been legalised to prove that there is no scientific basis in the belief that same-sex couples are not fit to be parents

Alisha Dutta
NEW DELHI

The Indian Psychiatric Society (IPS), the professional organisation of psychiatrists in India, on Sunday issued a statement mentioning the positive impact of legalisation of same-sex marriage on the mental health of individuals on the LGBTQIA spectrum. The body gathered scientific data from countries where same-sex marriage and adoption have been legalised to prove that there is no scientific basis in the belief that same-sex couples are not fit to be parents.

The move comes amid an ongoing case in the Supreme Court over providing legal validation for same-sex marriages.

The IPS, in its statement, mentioned that individuals on the LGBTQIA spectrum be treated like all citizens of the country, and they should "enjoy all civil rights like marriage, adoption, education, and employment, to name a few".

Opposing the Union of India's counter affidavit in the Supreme Court, they argued that "there is no evidence to indicate that individuals on the LGBTQIA spectrum cannot partake in any of the above. On the contrary, discrimination which prevents the above, may lead to mental health issues".

Based on research

The statement issued by the IPS is based on scientific research conducted in countries such as the U.K., the U.S., the Netherlands and Taiwan, where same-sex marriage and adoption by LGBTQIA couples has been legalised.

Dr. Ajit Bhide, the ex-president of IPS, says that "nowhere did we find that the same-sex couples were inept in adopting and fostering children."

Examples abound: The IPS concluded that children raised by same-sex couples did not systematically differ from other children on any of the outcomes. FILE PHOTO

"A study looking at 23 empirical studies on children raised by lesbian mothers or gay fathers were reviewed [one Belgian/Dutch, one Danish, three British, and 18 North American] that took into consideration their emotional functioning, sexual preference, stigmatisation, gender-role behaviour, behavioural adjustment, gender identity, and cognitive functioning. It concluded children raised by same-sex couples did not systematically differ from other children on any of the outcomes," the body said, further countering the Indian government's stand.

Lawyer and queer rights activist Rohin Bhatt said the statement was a welcome step. "We have read reports about all sorts of unscientific hogwash from the Solicitor-General about the effect marriage equality will have on children, but a statement based on scientific knowledge countering that argument will surely go a long way," he said.

The IPS also stated that a child adopted into a same-gendered family may face challenges, stigma, and/or discrimination along the way and therefore, it is imperative that, once legalised, such parents bring up the child in a gender-neutral, unbiased environment.

Further, the panel stressed the importance of sensitising social units such as families, communities, schools and society in general to protect and promote the development of such a child, and prevent stigma and discrimination at any cost.

'Sikkimese feel betrayed as Article 371F is violated'

Press Trust of India
GANGTOK

Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) supremo Pawan Kumar Chamling has claimed that the Sikkimese people feel betrayed as Article 371F, which guarantees special provisions for Sikkim, was "violated".

The former Chief Minister also alleged that Sikkim had become a hotbed for political violence and sought President's rule to ensure a free and fair election in 2024.

"The Financial Bill, 2023 redefines Sikkimese as any Indian citizen domiciled in Sikkim, extending to them the same benefits as that of the original inhabitants whose forefathers' names were in the 1961 register," Mr. Chamling said. "This violates Article 371F, which was the basis for the merger of Sikkim with India in 1975. People of Sikkim feel betrayed as the special provisions extended to them have been taken away."

Odisha plans to enlist all Jagannath temples

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government has decided to enlist the Jagannath temples in different parts of India and the world, as part of the State's efforts to promote its language, culture and heritage.

Chairing a Cabinet meeting through video-conferencing from Japan on Sunday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik approved the proposal to establish a Directorate of Odisha Paribar, to create a one-stop point of contact and support system for "Pravasi Odias".

The directorate will strengthen the relation between NROs and the State government and its people, through an organised liaisoning framework, a government statement said. It will be a single point of interface with the government departments for resolution of specific issues relating to labour, students, cultural promotion and clearances. Odia associations in different parts of India and foreign countries will be recorded.

Indian-American C.R. Rao wins Nobel Prize equivalent in statistics at the age of 102

Atanu Biswas

The Indian-American statistician Calyampudi Radhakrishna Rao has been awarded the 2023 International Prize in Statistics — the equivalent of the Nobel Prize for statistics. It is awarded once every two years to an individual or team "for major achievements using statistics to advance science, technology and human welfare".

The work of Professor Rao, 102, has influenced, in the words of the American Statistical Association, "not just statistics" but also "economics, genetics, anthropology, geology, national planning, demography, biometry and medicine".

The citation for his new award calls him "a professor whose work more than 75 years ago continues to exert a profound influence on science".

Professor Rao's groundbreaking paper, "Information and accuracy attainable in the estimation of statistical parameters", was published in 1945. It was an impressive achievement since he was only 25 at the time. He would go on to do his Ph.D. in 1946-1948 at King's College, Cambridge University, under the supervision of Ronald Fisher, regarded as the father of modern statistics.

C.R. Rao

The 1945 paper boosted the development of modern statistics and its application in research.

Rao score test

One of Professor Rao's papers in 1948 offered a novel generic approach to testing hypotheses, now widely known as the "Rao score test". This and two other tests, developed by Jerzy Neyman, E.S. Pearson and Abraham Wald, are sometimes called "the holy trinity" of this branch of statistics.

Professor Rao also contributed to orthogonal arrays, a concept in combinatorics used to design experiments whose results are qualitatively good, as early as 1949.

A 19-year-old Rao could not secure a scholarship at Andhra University for administrative reasons. He was also rejected for a job at an Army survey unit. When he was staying in Calcutta, a chance meeting led him to enroll at the Indian Statistical Institute, where he spent the next four decades. After his retirement in 1979, he settled in the U.S.

The first half of the 20th century was the golden period of statistical theory in general, and Rao is one of the reasons for this. As the renowned statistician Erich Lehmann wrote, Rao was "the person who did the most to continue [P.C.] Mahalanobis's work as a leader of statistics in India."

Atanu Biswas is Professor of statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata.

U.P. team to inspect prisons after inmates found linked to cases

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

The team of officers will probe the possibility of action taken as per the law in the jails

Crime can land a person in prison, but in Uttar Pradesh, it is often committed from prison as well.

After it was found that high-profile crime in the State is often linked to accused persons lodged inside prisons, with some jail officials acting hand-in-glove with criminals, the State Prison Department has constituted a team of Indian Police Service (IPS) officers who will inspect prisons and submit their report to the State government.

The Director-General of Prisons, S.N. Sabat, has constituted the team of IPS officers Shiv Hari Meena, Subhash Chandra Kashyap, Rajesh Kumar Srivastava, Hemant Kutiyal and Himanshu Kumar, who will inspect the prisons and probe irregularities, unwanted activities, and the possibility of action taken as per the law while checking the working system of the jails.

The jails in Prayagraj, Banda, Azamgarh, Varanasi, Sonbhadra, Ballia, Mau, Chitrakoot, Jaunpur and Fatehpur have been chosen for inspection, with Mr. Srivastava given responsibility to inspect Mau and Ballia district jails, while Mr. Meena will inspect Prayagraj and Chitrakoot jails.

The decision comes after the sensational murder of Umesh Pal, the key witness in the killing of former MLA Raju Pal on February 24.

During investigation, the jailer of Bareilly prison was suspected of providing facilities to Ashraf, a key accused in the murder.

The State government later suspended six Bareilly jail officials including the jailer.

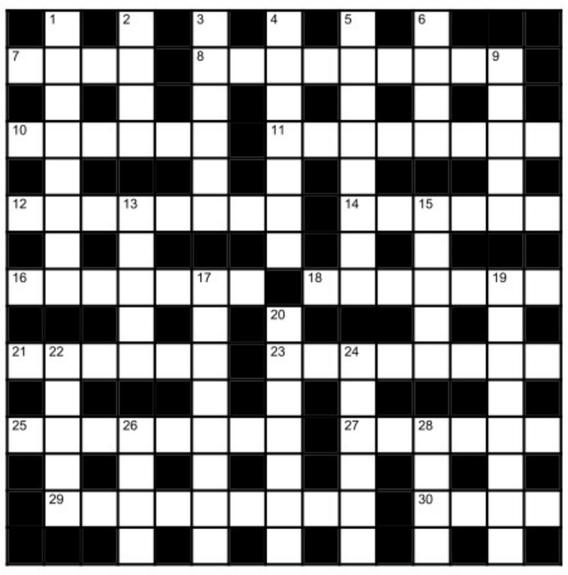
Likewise, the jail superintendent of Banda was suspended for providing facilities to Abbas Ansari, son of criminal-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari, in Banda jail.

TH CROSSWORD + 13835

(set by Incognito)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

7 / 9D Broadcast idea on air for show showcasing some answers in this puzzle (4,5)
8 Common people organise Ohio poll before fourth of April (3,6)
10 French love including right mail (6)
11 Bets wind moves around bedroom furniture perhaps unsuitable for Chang and Eng (4,4)
12 "Doctor, sick boy having sex appeal makes boring device" (5,3)
14 Juliet gets a bean for South American cat (6)
16 Gruesome female horse circles taxi (7)
18 Successive rulers from a family, I hear, pass away... Horrible! (7)
21 Native American having information about knock-out (6)
23 Yankee leaves military music groups for making sashes to be worn around upper limbs (8)
25 For example boxing fruit on broken thing (8)
27 Irritated Nero captured soldier in province (6)
29 Extraordinary night amidst fish giving natural discharge of electricity (9)
30 Observed new bishop's domain at first (4)

Down

1 Rare rat bits strewn around one in seal-able glass containers containing soil and plants (8)
2 Therefore, see alone (4)
3 Angel and actress endlessly getting massage (6)
4 Give orders to socially engage around Indian court (7)
5 Flashy person's Jap pony galloping around island (8)
6 Flat piece found in physics laboratory (4)
9 See 7 Across
13 Perhaps, plain bit of gorilla nostrils (5)
15 Chinese living in Georgia and an African country (5)
17 About directories of the most successful pragmatists (8)
19 Do petals transform into pollywogs? (8)
20 Watering hole profit? It's a snip (7)
22 Pivotal part of taxi alcove (5)
24 Optical illusion from image shifting around centre of the Sahara desert (6)
26 Very big embrace by Earl (4)
28 Surprised and sudden intake of breath from girl sitting on snake (4)

SUDOKU

		1						
	7	2						
8		4	3	7		6		
1		5		3	4		7	
6				5				8
	2		8	6		3		4
		8		2	3	5		1
						4	3	
						2		

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to previous puzzle

P	A	S	H	T	O		B	O	T	S	W	A	N	A
R		H		H			P		A		D		F	
O	E	U	V	R	E		C	A	R	N	I	V	A	L
V		N		E		B		L		A		E		A
I	N	T	H	E	R	A	W		A	N	O	N	Y	M
N		I		M		R	O		D		T		E	
C	A	N	D	I	D	C	A	M	E	R	A			
E		G		L		O		E		E		A		S
			D	E	A	D	O	N	T	A	R	G	E	T
T		F		I		E		T		S		E		O
A	H	I	M	S	A		B	U	N	F	I	G	H	T
L		A		L		A	M		A		R		I	
M	A	S	S	A	C	R	E		S	U	B	O	R	N
U		C		N		I			L		U		K	
D	R	O	P	D	E	A	D		U	T	O	P	I	A

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

6	4	7	2	5	1	9	8	3
1	2	9	3	8	6	5	7	4
3	8	5	7	4	9	6	2	1
9	1	6	4	2	5	8	3	7
5	3	4	8	6	7	2	1	9
8	7	2	9	1	3	4	5	6
7	5	1	6	9	8	3	4	2
2	6	8	1	3	4	7	9	5
4	9	3	5	7	2	1	6	8

FAITH

Duryodhana insults Vidura

Vidura did not give up advising Dhritarashtra and Duryodhana and he asked them to stop opposing the Pandavas, said Kidambi Narayanan, in a discourse. Although Dhritarashtra was the king, it was Duryodhana who was the de facto ruler, running things in the country. So Vidura said to Dhritarashtra, "The captain of a ship may be very young and inexperienced. If there is an experienced man on board the ship, who can guide him, the young captain would do well to consult him. Otherwise, the ship could get wrecked or sink." Here Vidura was indicating to Dhritarashtra that Duryodhana, because of lack of wisdom and experience, was not fit to helm the state, without a firm guiding hand. Dhritarashtra would have to be the man guiding him. Duryodhana's anger only increased as he heard Vidura speak. He said Vidura had always been ill-disposed towards the Kauravas, and had a fondness for the Pandavas. But the Pandavas were like snakes, warned Duryodhana, and Vidura was supporting the wrong people.

Duryodhana said he had not asked Vidura for advice, and asked him why he was offering advice unasked for. He said that he considered Vidura his enemy. At this point, Duryodhana made an interesting observation. He said there was one who commanded things in the world, and the world simply had to carry out the orders given. What Duryodhana meant was that destiny decided what people would do, and that being the case, he (Duryodhana) was only doing what destiny had planned for him. He said Vidura was welcome to leave and join the Pandava camp. Despite these insults from Duryodhana, Vidura stayed on.

MONEYWISE

ASKUS

N. Sree Kanth

Q I made an investment of ₹3 lakh in India First Life Insurance Co. Ltd. in their term life insurance plan in September 2010. It was a single premium plan with death benefits of ₹3 lakh (sum assured ₹3 lakh) and premium of ₹3 lakh.
The policy was surrendered in Oct. 2022 and based on NAV on the surrender date, the surrender value was around ₹7.80 lakh. The co. deducted at source at 5% on ₹4.80 lakh (excess over single premium value of ₹3 lakh). The co. deducted under I-T sec. 194 DA and showed ₹4.80 lakh under income from salary including pension and showed the TDS deducted. I have not claimed the policy premium under any deductions in my return for AY year 2011-12.
My queries are:
1. Is entire capital gain net of premium amount be fully treated as income? Is there no long term capital gain as for sale of shares?
2. Is there no inflation indexing? My investment was made in 2010 and sale was in 2022. Can we not apply inflation index on my premium value of ₹3 lakh and arrive at 2022 value?
3.The premium was invested in equity and other debt instruments and NAV arrived at on fluctuating market prices
4. Are there any exemptions of any part of income received?
5. I am a senior citizen drawing pension from my employer bank and this surrender income will come in 15% slab and it is a huge drain from my pocket.
L.RANGARAJAN

A For policies purchased between April 2003 and April 2012, the surrender value of the life insurance policy will be exempt from tax if the sum assured is at least 5 times the annual premium paid. As the policy taken by you does not fulfil the condition, the surrender value of your life insurance policy is taxable due to which the life insurance company has deducted the TDS under section 194DA. Deduction under section 80C is not required to be reversed in your case as you have not availed the deduction in the respective year of the premium payment. The surrender value of the policy will be taxable under 'Income from other sources'.

Q Myself and my spouse are working in PSU. We have purchased a plot in our joint names and intend to construct a house thereon. I have availed a home loan from my employer and that loan is also in joint names. However, the EMI will be recovered from my salary only as per the employment conditions.
Now, if both of us wants to claim the I-T benefits for the interest and also for the repayment under Sec. 80 C, is it necessary that my spouse has to pay the 50% share of the EMI to me every month? Whether it will be sufficient if she transfers 50% of the EMI every month to my bank account?
UNNI

A It is required for your spouse to service the loan in order for her to claim the benefits of loan repayment under Income Tax Act, 1961, with respect to her share in the property. The deduction of the interest portion of the loan, under Section 24 of the Income Tax Act, 1961, can be availed only post completion of the house property. So the interest paid until completion of the house property will be termed as pre-construction interest and the same can be claimed in 5 equal instalments in each assessment year post completion of the house property. Your employer is to provide an interest certificate each year during the tenure of the loan in both your names in order to claim the deduction in each of your hands.
Under Income Tax Act, 1961, an assessee can avail deduction under Section 80C with respect to the repayment of the principal portion of the EMI if the lender is assessee's employer where such an employer is a PSU.
It is being assumed that both yourself and your spouse work for the same PSU in which case the share of principal repayment of the EMI can be claimed under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act, 1961, in each of your hands.
(The writer is a partner, GSS and Associates, Chartered Accountants, Chennai)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

What is cyber insurance? Do small units need cover?

November 2022 data suggests about 43% of all cyberattacks targeted small businesses and start-ups. That is why it's all the more important for them to be equipped with cyber insurance

CYBER INSURANCE

Sajja Praveen Chowdary

Businesses steadily rely on digital technology to operate, store data, and communicate with a more extensive customer base, propelling their growth.

Although this convergence of offline and online worlds is a boon, it also raises cyberattack risks, particularly for small and medium-sized businesses, micro, small, and medium enterprises and start-ups.

These businesses are more vulnerable as they are still in the process of establishing robust cybersecurity means and expertise to combat cyber risks.

Thus, with the current interconnectivity, it has become crucial for small businesses to financially safeguard themselves from cyberattacks by taking cyber insurance.

Here are some situations where such insurance may provide cover:

If your business experiences a data breach, resulting in the theft or loss of sensitive data, cyber insurance can cover the loss.

Cover lost income
When a cyberattack causes a business to shut down or experience a disruption, cyber insurance can provide coverage for lost income and expenses.

If it results in damages to third parties, such as customers or partners, the insurance can cover legal defence costs and damages awarded.

So, what is cyber insurance?

Having a digital presence can sometimes be a catch-22 situation for small businesses. While it makes way for better efficiency, it also exposes companies to Internet-based perils.

These include data and security breaches, cyberattacks, intellectual property losses, cyber-safety hazards, financial fraud, etc.

Therefore, to mitigate such risks, start-ups and small businesses should purchase cyber insurance policy that has become more of a necessity than a choice. Moreover, the policy is now gaining popularity in India as it covers the expenses of investigating and repairing damages such as restoring lost data, incurring forensic costs, providing indemnification for lawsuits, compensating clients for any loss resulting from cyber incidents.

> The policy secures the company from the repercussions of being the potential victim of a cyber crisis that may cause financial and data loss and harm it's reputation

Is it essential?
MSMEs and start-ups are crucial growth drivers of the Indian economy and also contribute significantly to the country's GDP. However, November 2022 data suggests about 43% of all cyberattacks targeted small businesses and start-ups. That is why it's all the more important for them to be equipped with cyber insurance policy.

The policy secures the company from the repercussions of being the potential victim of a cyber crisis that may cause financial and data loss and harm it's reputation.

Kinds of coverage
First-party cover shields the business from costs incurred when it is afflicted by fraudulent activities such as a data breach.

Third-party cover offers protection from legal liabilities arising from any third party, including insured's customers, suppliers, business partners, and other stakeholders in the event of they suing the organisation for data breach and mishandling their data.

What is covered?
Some common costs covered in the policy are legal and legal representation costs, cyber extortion payouts, business interruption costs, administrative investigations, data recovery and reconstitution costs, forensic costs etc.

Estimation of premium
To acquire cyber insurance, businesses follow a standard procedure. Insurers comprehensively evaluate the risk and offer coverage options. Accordingly, the firms must share documents outlining the specifics of the security procedures and protocols. The insurer then follows statutory norms to determine the applicant's eligibility and the premium required. But, there is no fixed premium, as it varies based on the sector and the quality of risk.

What is not covered?
Cyber insurance broadly protects the insured against various risks; however, it comes with some exclusions such as violation of contracts, breach of trade secrets and trademarks, and disputes over registered patents or intellectual property.

In addition, deceitful or deliberate behaviour or any fraudulent act infringing the rule or regulation is not covered. Property damage, harm, or injuries caused due to negligence, lack of precaution to safeguard confidential banking information, etc., are also not covered. Ongoing and uninsurable legal cases and physical injury, death, or damage to any tangible object remain uninsured.

To recapitulate, cyber insurance is crucial for enterprises of all sizes, as companies conduct substantial business online.

But before buying, evaluate the features, and check the coverage limits, inclusions, and exclusions that correspond to your needs. Also, be cognisant and read the terms and conditions before purchasing the policy.

(The writer is Head - Corporate & SME Insurance, Policybazaar.com)

Pay as you go. But pay!

COVERNOTE

Health insurance has evolved over a period of time. From one-size-fits-all to a variety of options being offered to payment of premium in instalments, insurers have indeed come a long way

K. Nitya Kalyani

Options, choices, flexibility, freedom. Sweet words customers want to hear. More and more of these have been made available in insurance policies over the last few years.

Hospitalisation cover has come a long way from the one-size fits all days of the 1980s and 1990s. Not only coverage and scope, servicing and ease-of-use of the policy have made huge strides on the back of consumer demand, information technology use and a competitive environment.

Monitoring by the regulator has also contributed significantly to standardisation of coverage, terms and conditions, terminology, treatment protocols and introduction of service providers such as claim-settling agencies (Third-party Administrators - Health Services) and a system of 'network hospitals' where favourable rates are negotiated by insurers and cashless-claim settlement can be provided in that framework.

Let us in this and the next few instalments of Covernote see a few interesting, new options in hospitalisation policies that were not available or pretty hard to come by in the past. Instalment premiums are a very interesting new facility. Inspired by the financial situations created by the pandemic crossing paths with the gig economy, this feature resulted from a push given by the regulator.

Earlier, there was only annual premium and then came multi-year policies with a discount for paying up 2 or 3 years premium upfront with the promise of a price guarantee!

The market, especially a developing market like India with its massive demographics, begs segmentation. And so came instalment premium.

Companies offer monthly, quarterly and half-yearly premium payment for health policies now. It comes with its own terms and conditions. While you have a grace period, remember you will be without coverage until you actually pay up.

Making claims
That is, you cannot make a claim for any hospitalisation in the interim period. The grace period is typically 7 days for monthly instalments and 15 days for quarterly and half-yearly instalments. Should you fail to use the grace period, your policy will lapse and no claim can be preferred after that at all. It's especially suited for young gig workers or families with stretched monthly budgets that cannot accommodate an annual bullet premium amount. As they say, with freedom comes responsibility and this responsibility towards yourself and your family's financial security in the face of health-care expenses is grave.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
HDFC Bank	10.50 onwards	10,747 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to Rs 4,999
Citi Bank	10.75 onwards	10,809 onwards	2,162 onwards	Up to 3%
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3%
ICICI Bank	10.75 onwards	10,809 onwards	2,162 onwards	Up to 2.50%
Bank of Baroda	10.90-18.25	10,846-12,765	2,169-2,553	Up to 2% (Min Rs 1,000 and Max Rs 10,000)
State Bank of India	11.00-15.00	10,871-11,895	2,174-2,379	Up to 1.50% (Rs 1,000-Rs 15,000)
Axis Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3%
Bank of India	10.35-14.85	10,710-11,856	2,142-2,371	Up to 1% (Max Rs 5,000)
Canara Bank	11.75-16.25	11,059-12,226	2,212-2,445	Up to 1%
Punjab National Bank	10.40-16.95	10,772-12,413	2,144-2,483	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	9.75-16.00	10,562-12,159	2,112-2,432	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.49-14.49	10,994-11,762	2,199-2,352	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	11.40-15.50	10,971-12,027	2,194-2,405	Up to 1% (Max Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	11.00 onwards	10,871 onwards	2,174 onwards	Upto 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	11.15-12.75	10,909-11,313	2,182-2,263	Up to 1%
South Indian Bank	12.85-20.60	11,338-13,414	2,268-2,683	Up to 2%
UCO Bank	12.45-12.85	11,236-11,338	2,247-2,268	Up to 1%
IDFC First Bank	10.49 onwards	10,809 onwards	2,162 onwards	Up to 3.50%
Karnataka Bank	14.12	11,665	2,333	Up to 2% of loan amount (Min. Rs 2,500 & Max.Rs 8,500)
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 3%

Car Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
Union Bank of India	9.30 - 10.50	10,452 - 10,747	Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	8.60 - 9.75	10,282 - 10,562	0.25% (Rs. 1000 - Rs. 1500)
Bank of Baroda	8.70 - 12.70	10,307 - 11,300	0.50% (Rs 2,500 - Rs 10,000)
Canara Bank	9.15 - 11.95	10,416 - 11,110	0.25% (Rs 1,000 - Rs 5,000)
Bank of India	8.85 - 10.85	10,343 - 10,834	NIL
UCO Bank	8.70 - 10.55	10,307 - 10,759	1% (Up to Rs 1,500)
State Bank of India	8.60 - 9.65	10,282 - 10,538	Up to 0.25%
IDBI Bank	8.75 - 9.45	10,319 - 10,489	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.90 - 13.00	10,355 - 11,377	0.25% (Rs 1,000 - Rs 15,000)
Indian Overseas Bank**	8.85 onwards	10,343 onwards	0.50% (Rs 500 - Rs 5,000)
ICICI Bank	8.75 onwards	10,319 onwards	Rs 999 - Rs 9,000
HDFC Bank	8.75 onwards	10,319 onwards	0.50% (Rs 3,500 - Rs 8,000)
Karnataka Bank	9.26 - 11.68	10,442 - 11,042	0.60% (Rs 3,000 - Rs 11,000)
Federal Bank	11.00	10,871	Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500
Indian Bank	8.60 - 9.70	10,282 - 10,550	0.50% (Max. Rs 10,000)
South Indian Bank	11.65 - 13.10	11,034 - 11,402	1% (Max: Rs 10,000)
City Union Bank	14.25 - 14.75	11,699 - 11,829	1.25% (Min: Rs 1,000)

**0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holders.*
***0.50% interest rate concession to borrowers with credit scores of 750 and above. Interest rate concession of 0.20% to borrowers for financing Electric 4 Wheelers. 0.20% concession to existing Housing Loan Borrowers.*

Rates and charges as on April 5 **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

FLORIDA

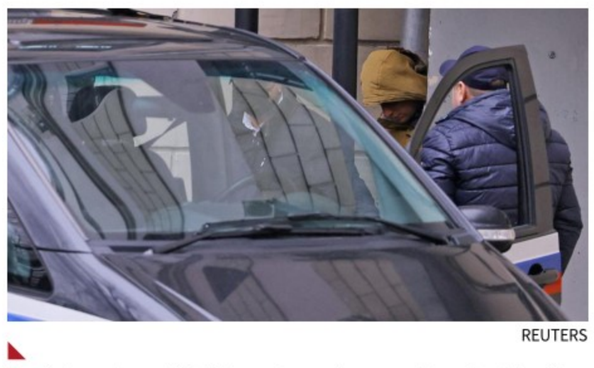
Ben Ferencz, last living Nuremberg prosecutor of Nazis, dies aged 103

AP

Ben Ferencz, the last living prosecutor from the Nuremberg trials and who was among the first witnesses to document the atrocities of Nazi concentration camps, died. He had just turned 103 in March. Ferencz died on Friday evening in Boynton Beach, Florida, according to St. John's University law professor John Barrett. AP

MOSCOW

Russia charges WSJ reporter Evan Gershkovich with espionage



REUTERS

Russia has charged *Wall Street Journal* reporter Evan Gershkovich with espionage, the *Interfax* news agency reported. Russia's Federal Security Service said on March 30 that it had opened an espionage case against the 31-year-old for collecting alleged state secrets about the military industrial complex. REUTERS

LONDON

British PM Rishi Sunak to meet U.S. President in Northern Ireland

GETTY IMAGES

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak will meet Joe Biden in Northern Ireland next week when the U.S. President flies in to take part in events to mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday peace accord. The U.S. has sought to protect the peace from the strains caused by Britain's exit from the European Union. REUTERS

ISLAMABAD

Roadside bomb kills two soldiers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province

AP

A roadside bomb exploded in northwest Pakistan, killing two soldiers who were travelling in their vehicle, the military said. The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. The banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan gave a higher death toll in Saturday's attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying eight soldiers died. AP

China simulates strikes on Taiwan on day two of drills

China began three days of military exercises around the island on Saturday; Taiwan Defence Ministry says that it had spotted 58 Chinese aircraft and nine ships around its territory

Reuters
TAIPEI

China's military simulated precision strikes against Taiwan in a second day of drills around the island on Sunday, with the island's Defence Ministry reporting multiple air force sorties and that it was monitoring China's missile forces.

China, which claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, began three days of military exercises around the island on Saturday, the day after Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen returned from a visit to the U.S. Chinese state television reported that the combat readiness patrols and drills around Taiwan were continuing.

"Under the unified command of the theatre joint operations command centre, multiple types of units carried out simulated joint precision strikes on key targets on Taiwan island and the surrounding sea areas, and continue to maintain an offensive posture around the island," it said. A Taiwan security source said that on Saturday, the Chinese drills around the Bashi Channel, which separates Taiwan from the Philippines, included simulated attacks on aircraft carrier groups and anti-submarine drills.

Preparations under way: Soldiers of Taiwanese Army take part in a military exercise at an undisclosed location in Taiwan. REUTERS

Taiwan's Defence Ministry said that as of Sunday midday they had spotted 58 Chinese aircraft, including Su-30 fighters and H-6 bombers, as well as nine ships, around Taiwan.

The Ministry said they were paying particular attention to the People's Liberation Army's Rocket Force which is in charge of China's land-based missile system. "Regarding the movements of the Chinese communists' Rocket Force, the island's military also has a close grasp through the joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance system, and air defence forces remain on high alert," it said. It reiterated that Taiwan's forces will "not escalate conflicts nor cause disputes" and would respond "appropriately" to China's drills.

U.S. monitors drills

The *de facto* U.S. embassy in Taiwan said the U.S. was monitoring China's drills around Taiwan closely and is "comfortable and confident" it has sufficient resources and capabilities to ensure peace and stability.

U.S. channels of communication with China remain open and it had consistently urged restraint and no change to the status quo, said a spokesperson for the American Institute in Taiwan.

Two killed in Russian strike on Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia

Reuters
KYIV

A 50-year-old man and his 11-year-old daughter were killed after Russian forces struck a residential building in the southeastern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia early on Sunday, authorities said.

Ukraine's State Emergency service also reported that a 46-year-old woman, who it described as the wife and mother of the victims, was pulled from the wreckage.

City council secretary Anatoliy Kurtev said two missiles had destroyed one building and damaged dozens of others during the overnight strike.

"The cursed Russian terrorists attacked Zaporizhzhia again and lost human lives," he wrote on the Telegram messaging app. The strike was the latest in a series of attacks on civilian targets as Moscow's full-scale invasion drags into its second year.

Israel attacks Syrian targets in response to rocket fire

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Israel launched artillery strikes on Syria on Sunday morning, the Israeli Army announced, after several rockets were fired from there and landed in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Israel's retaliatory strike to rocket attacks from Syria – which no one has claimed – is the latest episode in escalating violence in the region.

"In response to the rockets fired from Syria at Israel, IDF Artillery is striking in Syrian territory," the military said on Twitter. A drone was also "currently striking the launchers in Syria from which rockets were launched into Israeli territory". Six rockets were launched towards Israel on Saturday night, with two landing in the Golan Heights, the Army said. At least one was intercepted by the Israeli air defence system.

The 1,200-sq. km region – patrolled by Israeli soldiers and bordering Lebanon – was seized from Syria in the 1967 War. Israel later annexed it in a move that was never recognised by the international community.

An Israeli soldier searches for a rocket that landed in the Golan Heights on Sunday. AFP

Syrian state news agency *SANA* said the Israeli strikes took place around 5 a.m. local time.

Citing an unnamed military source, *SANA* said Syria's military had "intercepted the rockets... and brought down some of them". The surge in violence and unrest comes as the Muslim fasting month of Ramzan, Jewish Passover, and Christian Easter coincide.

Hezbollah, Hamas chiefs in Beirut over Israel strike

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

The leaders of the armed movements Hezbollah and Hamas have met in Beirut to discuss "the readiness of the axis of resistance" against Israel, a Hezbollah statement said on Sunday.

Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, has been in Beirut since Wednesday. Israel blamed Hamas for firing 34 rockets towards its territory from southern Lebanon, the stronghold of the Iran-backed Shiite movement Hezbollah. Israel's Army retaliated early on Friday with strikes on Lebanon and Gaza, after rockets targeting Israel were also fired from the coastal enclave.

Europe must not be a 'follower' of U.S., China on Taiwan: Macron

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

French President Emmanuel Macron said in an interview published on Sunday that Europe must not be a "follower" of either the U.S. or China on Taiwan, saying that the bloc risks entanglement in "crises that aren't ours".

His comments risk riling Washington and highlight divisions in the European Union over how to approach China, as the U.S. steps up confrontation with its rival and Beijing draws closer to Russia after its invasion of Ukraine.

"The worst thing would be to think we Europeans must be followers and adapt ourselves to the American rhythm and a Chinese overreaction," he said . Citing his ideal of EU "strategic autonomy", the French leader said that "we must be clear where our views overlap with the U.S., but whether it's about Ukraine, relations to China or sanctions, we have a European strategy."

"We don't want to get into a bloc logic," he added, saying Europe "should not be caught up in a disordering of the world and crises that aren't ours".

Saudi officials visit Yemen for talks with rebels

Associated Press
CAIRO

Saudi officials were in Yemen's capital on Sunday for talks with the Iran-backed Houthi rebels, as part of international efforts to find a settlement to Yemen's nine-year conflict, officials said.

Saudi Arabia's delegation, chaired by the kingdom's Ambassador to Yemen, Mohammed bin Saeed Al-Jaber, will hold talks with Mahdi al-Mashat, head of the Houthi's supreme political council, which runs rebel-held areas in Yemen, according to the Houthi-run *SABA* news agency.

An Omani delegation, which arrived in Sanaa on Saturday, will also join the talks, the agency reported, citing an unidentified source. Mohammed al-Bukaiti, a Houthi leader, said on Twitter that Saudi and Omani officials would discuss "ways to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region."

He said achieving an honorable peace between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia would be "a triumph for both parties," and urged all sides to take steps to "preserve a peaceful atmosphere and prepare to turn the page of the past."

There was no immediate comment from Saudi Arabia. The office of the UN envoy for Yemen didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

The talks in Sanaa are part of international efforts led by Oman to settle Yemen's conflict, which began in 2014. That's when the Houthis seized Sanaa and much of the country's north, ousting the internationally recognised government that fled to the south and then into exile in Saudi Arabia.

The Houthi move prompted a Saudi-led coalition to intervene months later in a bid to restore the internationally recognised government to power. The conflict has in recent years turned into a regional proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Saudi Arabia and the Houthis reached a draft deal last month to revive a cease-fire that expired in October. The deal is meant to usher in a return to Yemeni political talks, according to Saudi and Yemeni officials.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss closed-door negotiations.

Sport

Arsenal blows a two-goal lead as Liverpool hold on for a draw

EURO LEAGUES

Agencies
LIVERPOOL

A dogged second half performance from Liverpool for a pulsating 2-2 draw against Arsenal on Sunday opened up the title race in the Premier League after Manchester City's emphatic win over Southampton earlier on Saturday.

Arsenal thought it had pulled ahead by eight points when it took a 2-0 lead in the first half hour of play through goals from Brazilians Gabriel Martinelli and Gabriel Jesus. But Liverpool was not to be denied, as goals from Mohammad Salah, late in the first half, and Roberto Firmino, similarly late in the second half, punished a tiring Arsenal leaving it with a six-point lead over champion City, with visits to the Etihad and third-placed Newcastle yet to come.

Heartbreaker: Firmino heads in Liverpool's equaliser against Arsenal. GETTY IMAGES

Samuel Chukwueze upstaged Vinicius Junior by scoring twice in an outstanding performance by the Villarreal forward to lead its 3-2 comeback win at Real Madrid in LaLiga.

The results:

On Sunday: Premier League: Leeds 1 (Bamford 21) lost to Crystal Palace 5 (Guehi 45, Ayew 53, 77, Eze 55, Edouard 69); Liverpool 2 (Salah 42, Firmino 87) drew with Arsenal 2 (Martinelli 8, Jesus 28).

On Saturday:

LaLiga: Real Sociedad 2 (Oyarzabal 45+2, Kubo 60) bt Getafe 0; Real Madrid 2 (Torres 16-og, Vinicius 48) lost to Villarreal 3 (Chukwueze 39, 80, Morales 70).

Serie A: Atalanta 0 lost to Bologna 2 (Sansone 49, Orsolini 86); Fiorentina 1 (Wisniewski 25-og) drew with Spezia 1 (Nzola 32); Lazio 2 (Milinkovic-Savic 38, Zaccagni 53) bt Juventus 1 (Rabiot 42) Torino 0 lost to Roma 1 (Dybala 8-pen).

Hyderabad proves too good for Aizawl

SUPER CUP

P.K. Ajith Kumar
MANJERI

Hyderabad FC was without its main striker, but that didn't matter much. The ISL side was too good for Aizawl FC in the Group B opening match in the Super Cup football tournament here on Sunday.

Hyderabad won 2-1. Joel Chianese and Joao Victor – from the penalty spot – scored in either half for the winner, while Ivan Veras reduced the margin for the I-League club late into injury time.

Aizawl put up a good fight, but that wasn't enough against a formidable opponent that was playing without its prolific scorer Bartholomew Ogbeche. Hyderabad went on the offensive right from the beginning, and with Abdul Rabeeh, who hails from this district (Malappuram), being a constant menace on the right-wing, Aizawl's defence was under pressure.

The opener: Joel Chianese scores Hyderabad's first against Aizawl. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

It was Rabeeh who set up the first goal. On a counter-attack, following a corner-kick, he sped away furiously from his own half, overcame the Aizawl defenders, and released a superb pass to Chianese near the edge of the box. The Australian would score off a rebound; he had passed on the ball to Borja Gonzalez.

Six minutes into the second half, Hyderabad was awarded a penalty for a foul on Aaren D'Silva. Victor's shot from the spot was an excellent one.

Aizawl's goal came off a lovely long-ranger by Veras, but it was far too late.

Later, East Bengal and Odisha FC drew 1-1 in what was the first match in the tournament between two ISL teams. After Mobashir Rahman put the Kolkata team ahead in the first half, Nandha Kumar equalised for Odisha.

The results: Hyderabad FC 2 (Joel Chianese 17, Joao Victor 51-pen) bt Aizawl FC 1 (Ivan Veras 90+6); East Bengal 1 (Mobashir Rahman 38) drew with Odisha FC 1 (Nandha Kumar 73).

WORDS OF INSPIRATION

Captain Rana asked me to keep the belief and bat till the end: Rinku

Rinku Singh revealed that he had the belief he could do it though 29 were needed off six deliveries. "Rana *bhai* asked me to keep the belief and bat till the end. Umesh *bhai* asked me not to think much and just play the ball. I was not thinking a lot, was just reacting to the ball. It kept coming out of the middle," said Rinku.

INCREDIBLE FINISH

Lord Rinku saved the day for Knight Riders, says Venkatesh Iyer

Rinku Singh's stunning final over heroics earned him the moniker "lord" from teammate Venkatesh Iyer. "Nitish and I had a good partnership, but unfortunately we lost our way. Fortunately, Lord Rinku saved the day. This teaches us that we should never give up until the last ball," said Venkatesh.

A HAT-TRICK, BUT...

Rashid all praise for Rinku for finishing the way he did

Gujarat Titans skipper Rashid Khan was left heartbroken despite performing a hat-trick and putting his team on the verge of victory. "Rinku played unbelievable shots and credit goes to him for the way he played and finished. As a bowling unit we got enough to defend, but sometimes in T20 even 250 does not look good," said Rashid.

DOUBLE WHAMMY

Injured Chahar and Stokes to miss CSK's next few matches

Deepak Chahar, *in pic.*, and Ben Stokes have been ruled out of CSK's next few matches. Stokes sustained a toe injury during training ahead of Saturday's match against Mumbai Indians and could be out for at least 10 days. Chahar injured his hamstring during the MI match and will undergo scans to identify the extent of the injury.

Rinku's last-over carnage helps Knight Riders pull off a heist

The southpaw hits five consecutive sixes off Yash Dayal to hand Titans a gut-wrenching loss; Rashid's hat-trick in vain

IPL-16

Ayan Acharya
AHMEDABAD

The IPL 2023 match between the Gujarat Titans and Kolkata Knight Riders at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad was wonderfully devastating and awesomely dramatic. The final moments of KKR's 205-run chase were at once cathartic and gut-wrenching.

Needing 29 to win off six balls, Rinku Singh hit Yash Dayal for five consecutive sixes to seal a three-wicket win for KKR.

Costly spell

Venkatesh Iyer's 40-ball 83 had brought the equation down to 50 off 24. Rashid Khan, leading in the absence of Hardik Pandya, had gone for 35 in his first three.

But with Andre Russell at the crease, a batter he has got out four times in 38 balls in T20s, Rashid came on and sealed the first hat-trick of this IPL.

Russell was the first to go, caught behind. Sunil Narine and Shardul Thakur fell next as KKR's riposte threatened to fizzle out. But Rinku had other plans.

Earlier, Mohammed Shami and Josh Little - GT's Impact Player - removed Rahmanullah Gurbaz and N. Jagadeesan early. But Impact Player Venkatesh and captain Nitish Rana fought back with a 100-run stand in 54 balls.

However, Joseph soon had Rana caught at mid-off. Venkatesh was fighting dehydration. The heat exhaustion took its toll when he miscued a shot to be caught. But it was a dismissal that ultimately flattered to deceive GT.

In the afternoon, Gujarat elected to bat. With the ball expected to stop and turn on a black soil surface, Narine and Varun Chakravarthy bowled in the PowerPlay.

Narine struck with his second ball when Wriddhiman Saha was caught by Jagadeesan. Gill and Sai Sudharsan then added 67 for the second wicket before Narine finally got Gill caught. Meanwhile, Sudharsan hit his second consecutive fifty this season, off 34 balls, but fell to Narine shortly after.

What came next was utter carnage. Vijay Shankar smacked four fours and five sixes to finish unbeaten on 63 off 24.

But as it turned out, this was only a prelude to an evening of unfathomable exhilaration.

Bang, bang, bang... Rinku smashed five successive sixes to script an incredible win for Knight Riders when it required 29 off the last six deliveries.

The final over

29 runs needed off six balls

19.1	19.2	19.3	19.4	19.5	19.6
1	6	6	6	6	6

Umesh took a single off the first delivery bowled by Yash Dayal before Rinku smashed the next five for sixes

Rashid Khan registered the 22nd hat-trick of the IPL, and the first of the season, when he dismissed Russell, Narine and Shardul in that order

Next assignment

GT: April 13 vs. PBKS
Mohali, 7.30 p.m.

KKR: April 14 vs. SRH
Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.

Blitz: Rinku turned the match on its head with a sensational show in the 20th over. SPORTZPICS/ IPL

Points Table

	M	W	L	Pts	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	3	2	1	4	2.067
Kolkata Knight Riders	3	2	1	4	1.375
Lucknow Super Giants	3	2	1	4	1.358
Gujarat Titans	3	2	1	4	0.431
Chennai Super Kings	3	2	1	4	0.356
Punjab Kings	3	2	1	4	-0.281
Royal Challengers Bangalore	2	1	1	2	-1.256
Sunrisers Hyderabad	3	1	2	2	-1.502
Mumbai Indians	2	0	2	0	-1.394
Delhi Capitals	3	0	3	0	-2.092

After the SRH-PBKS match on April 9

SCOREBOARD

GUJARAT TITANS

Wriddhiman Saha c Jagadeesan b Narine 17 *(17b, 3x4)*, Shubman Gill c Umesh b Narine 39 *(31b, 5x4)*, Sai Sudharsan c sub (Roy) b Narine 53 *(38b, 3x4, 2x6)*, Abhinav Manohar b Suyash 14 *(8b, 3x4)*, Vijay Shankar (not out) 63 *(24b, 4x4, 5x6)*, David Miller (not out) 2 *(3b)*, Extras (b-1, lb-4, nb-1, w-10): 16; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 204.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-33 (Saha, 4.2 overs), 2-100 (Gill, 11.4), 3-118 (Manohar, 13.3), 4-153 (Sudharsan, 17.3).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING

Umesh 3-0-24-0, Shardul 3-0-40-0, Ferguson 4-0-40-0, Narine 4-0-33-3, Varun 2-0-27-0, Suyash 4-0-35-1.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Rahmanullah Gurbaz c Yash Dayal b Shami 15 *(12b, 1x4, 1x6)*, N. Jagadeesan c Manohar b Little 6 *(8b, 1x4)*, Venkatesh Iyer **(Impact Player in place of Suyash Sharma)** c Gill b Joseph 83 *(40b, 8x4, 5x6)*, Nitish Rana c Shami b Joseph 45 *(29b, 4x4, 3x6)*, Rinku Singh (not out) 48 *(21b, 1x4, 6x6)*, Andre Russell c sub (Bharat) b Rashid 1 *(2b)*, Sunil Narine c sub (Jayant Yadav) b Rashid 0 *(1b)*, Shardul Thakur lbw b Rashid 0 *(1b)*, Umesh Yadav (not out) 5 *(6b)*, Extras (lb-1, w-3): 4; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 207.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-20 (Gurbaz, 2.3 overs), 2-28 (Jagadeesan), 3-128 (Rana, 13.1), 4-154 (Venkatesh, 15.5), 5-155 (Russell, 16.1), 6-155 (Narine, 16.2), 7-155 (Thakur, 16.3).

TITANS BOWLING

Shami 4-0-28-1, Little **(Impact Player in place of Sai Sudharsan)** 4-0-45-1, Joseph 4-0-27-2, Yash Dayal 4-0-69-0, Rashid 4-0-37-3.

Toss: Titans.
PoM: Rinku.

Knight Riders won by three wickets off the final delivery.

The kingpin(s): While Dhawan hammered an unbeaten 99 for Punjab, Tripathi outshone him by powering Hyderabad past the finish line with plenty to spare. NAGARA GOPAL/PTI

Dhawan dazzles but Tripathi, Sunrisers have the final say

V.S. Aravind
HYDERABAD

Rahul Tripathi produced a match-winning knock as Sunrisers Hyderabad tasted its first success of the season with an eight-wicket victory over Punjab Kings at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on Sunday.

Chasing a target of 144, Sunrisers were powered by Tripathi, who scored an unbeaten 74 off 48 balls (10x4, 3x6), and took the team home in the company of skipper Aiden Markram (37 n.o., 21b, 6x4). It was Tripathi's first half-century of the season and 11th in the IPL.

Batting with a slightly wider stance, Tripathi took time to assess the pace and bounce of the wicket before playing some exquisite strokes. He punished the bowlers whenever they erred in line and length.

Tripathi and Markram forged an unbeaten 100-run stand off 52 deliveries for the third wicket as Sunrisers won with 17 balls to spare.

Sunrisers tinkered with their batting line-up again, promoting Harry Brook as opener. Brook and his partner Mayank Agarwal made a sedate start before Arshdeep Singh gave the breakthrough by castling Brook. Mayank departed soon after. However, that proved the final wicket of the day for Kings.

Earlier, Shikhar Dhawan's brilliant unbeaten 99 (66b, 12x4, 5x6) took his team to 143 for nine. The Kings captain batted through the innings and stitched partnerships with Sam Curran and No. 11 Mohit Rathee.

The Sunrisers bowlers, who were picking up wickets at regular intervals, erred in the final few overs and allowed the Kings skipper to take charge.

Dhawan and Mohit were involved in an unbeaten 55-run stand for the last wicket.

The skipper smashed the last ball of the innings for a six and finished one short of a century.

But once Tripathi got going, it became evident that it was the Kings who had fallen well short of posting a total that would test Sunrisers.

SCOREBOARD

PUNJAB KINGS

Prabhsimran Singh lbw b Bhuvneshwar 0 *(1b)*, Shikhar Dhawan (not out) 99 *(66b, 12x4, 5x6)*, Matthew Short lbw b Jansen 1 *(3b)*, Jitesh Sharma c Markram b Jansen 4 *(9b, 1x4)*, Sam Curran c Bhuvneshwar b Markande 22 *(15b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Sikandar Raza **(Impact Player in place of Prabhsimran)** c Mayank b Umran 5 *(6b)*, Shahrukh Khan lbw b Markande 4 *(3b, 1x4)*, Harpreet Brar b Umran 1 *(2b)*, Rahul Chahar lbw b Markande 0 *(8b)*, Nathan Ellis b Markande 0 *(5b)*, Mohit Rathee (not out) 1 *(2b)*; Extras (lb-1, w-5): 6; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 143.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-0 (Prabhsimran, 0.1 overs), 2-10 (Short, 1.2), 3-22 (Jitesh, 3.5), 4-63 (Curran, 8.5), 5-69 (Sikandar, 9.5), 6-74 (Shahrukh, 10.4), 7-77 (Harpreet, 11.2), 8-78 (Chahar, 12.5), 9-88 (Ellis, 14.6).

SUNRISERS BOWLING

Bhuvneshwar 4-0-33-1, Jansen 3-1-16-2, Natarajan 4-0-40-0, Washington 1-0-6-0, Markande 4-0-15-4, Umran 4-0-32-2.

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

Harry Brook b Arshdeep 13 *(14b, 3x4)*, Mayank Agarwal c Curran b Chahar 21 *(20b, 3x4)*, Rahul Tripathi (not out) 74 *(48b, 10x4, 3x6)*, Aiden Markram (not out) 37 *(21b, 6x4)*; Total (for two wkts. in 17.1 overs): 145.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-27 (Brook, 3.5), 2-45 (Mayank, 8.3).

PUNJAB KINGS BOWLING

Curran 3-0-14-0, Arshdeep 3-0-20-1, Harpreet 3.1-0-26-0, Ellis 3-0-28-0, Chahar 3-0-28-1, Rathee 2-0-29-0.

Toss: SRH; **PoM:** Dhawan.

SRH won by eight wickets with 17 balls to spare.

Next assignment

PBKS: April 13 vs. GT
Mohali, 7.30 p.m.

SRH: April 14 vs. KKR
Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.

Royal Challengers need a stabiliser as they take on Super Giants

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

TODAY'S MATCH

Bengaluru,, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 2
RCB 2 | LSG 0

PREVIOUS MEETING
RCB won by 14 runs, 2022

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA APP

Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) will look to stabilise its capricious form when it takes on Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Monday.

Though two games do not form an adequate-enough sample size to examine credentials, the wild shift in the franchise's performance will not go unnoticed.

While RCB thrashed Mumbai Indians by eight wickets in its opening fixture at home, it capitulated against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Eden Gardens by 81 runs.

Planners: RCB batting coach Bangar and du Plessis getting ready with a strategy to counter the Super Giants bowlers. K. MURALI KUMAR

KKR spinners Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarthy bamboozled famed batters like Virat Kohli, Faf du Plessis and Glenn Maxwell. LSG has a fine spin combination comprising Ravi Bishnoi, Krunal Pandya and wily veteran Amit Mishra, and though they may not be of the 'mystery' variety, RCB will need to be careful.

The loss of speedster Reece Topley for the rest of the season will hurt but David Willey's excellent show against KKR (4-1-16-2) means captain du Plessis has cover.

However, the pace duo of Mohammed Siraj and Akash Deep needs to tighten up.

K.L. Rahul's LSG comes into the match with two wins from three outings.

The traditionally batter-friendly Chinnaswamy – and its small boundaries – should be to the visitors' liking.

Explosive batters like Kyle Mayers, Quinton de Kock and Nicholas Pooran should relish the conditions.

Rahul has thus far played a steady hand but is more than capable of turning it on when required. Wouldn't he love to come good at a venue so dear to him and against a side in whose colours he made his IPL debut?

Koepka takes two-shot lead; Woods pulls out

AUGUSTA MASTERS

Reuters
AUGUSTA

Brooks Koepka will take a two-shot lead over Jon Rahm into the final round of a Masters Green Jacket showdown on a marathon day of high drama at Augusta National on Sunday.

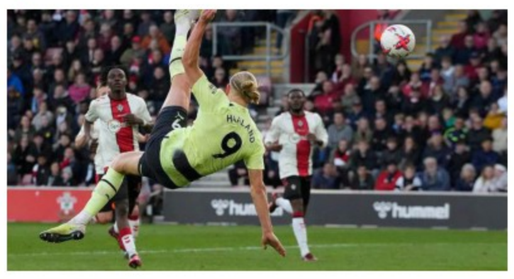
But what had appeared to be a two-horse race turned into a threeway battle as Norway's Viktor Hovland staged a back-nine charge to get within three of the leader.

After two days of interrupted play, the field of 53 returned to the waterlogged course to complete the third round with Koepka four clear of Rahm.

Tiger Woods pulled out of the tournament with a foot injury on Sunday.

It is the second time in the past year that he has been forced to withdraw from a Major. Woods had had to battle to avoid the cut, making it at the bottom of the leaderboard.

INBRIEF



Guardiola hails Haaland as on same level as Messi, Ronaldo

Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola said Erling Haaland is at the standard of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo when it comes to finding the net after scoring twice on his return from injury in a 4-1 win at Southampton on Saturday. "The second goal was amazing. It is not easy to pick the ball up in the sky and put it on the grass," said Guardiola. "We lived two incredible decades with Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi but he is on that level. He scores a lot of goals."

If Madrid have switched off, it's because of us: Xavi

Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez believes if Real Madrid have given up on La Liga, it is because of his side's superb season, he told a news conference on Sunday. "I don't know if they've switched off or not, but if they have, it's thanks to us," said Xavi. "Tomorrow it's important to increase the gap to 15 points. It won't mean anything is sealed, but it would be a spectacular distance. It doesn't interest me if Madrid do something or don't, what interests me is what we do. Winning La Liga is incredible, winning the league gives you stability. I remember (former Real Madrid coach Zinedine) Zidane, after winning the Champions League, saying that the objective was to win La Liga. It's being minimised that winning a league would be extraordinary."

PCB names Bradburn interim coach for New Zealand series

The Pakistan Cricket Board has confirmed the interim appointment of Grant Bradburn as head coach, Abdul Rehman assistant head coach, and Andrew Puttick and Umar Gul the batting and bowling coaches for the series against New Zealand.

Priyanshu wins maiden World Tour Super 300 title

Downs World No. 49 Johannesen in a 68-minute summit clash to grab biggest title of his career; the 21-year-old had been part of last year's Thomas Cup-winning Indian team

ORLEANS MASTERS

Press Trust of India
ORLEANS

India's Priyanshu Rajawat capped an impressive week with a thrilling win over Denmark's Magnus Johannesen to claim the men's singles title at the Orleans Masters here on Sunday.

The 21-year-old from Madhya Pradesh, who was part of last year's Thomas Cup-winning Indian team, saw off World No. 49 Johannesen 21-15, 19-21, 21-16 in a 68-minute summit clash to grab the biggest title of his career.

The two shuttlers, having made the final after coming through the qualifiers, dished out some superb badminton.

It was the first meeting between the two 21-year-olds, both looking for a breakthrough win. But, Rajawat, who did not drop a single game in the $240,000 tournament, showed his maturity with some controlled aggression. The forehand-cross-court-jump smash was Rajawat's main weapon.

A year ago, Rajawat had returned early from Orleans when it was a Super 100 event.

On top: Rajawat did not drop a single game in the $240,000 tournament. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

All eyes will be on Sreeshankar in the Indian Grand Prix-3

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

All eyes will be on the long jump pit where M. Sreeshankar will make his much awaited return from injury in the Indian Grand Prix-3 at the Kanteerava stadium on Monday.

It will be Sreeshankar's first competitive meet after the National Games and he is using the opportunity to test his fitness and form. "Sreeshankar will be taking it a little easy in this meet. He has not set any specific target for himself.

"We just want to test his fitness as we started training only two months ago after the injury sidelined him for nearly three months. He is aiming to reach his peak form by June-July, when he has some important meets lined up in his schedule," said Sreeshankar's coach and father S. Murali.

Meanwhile, the country's top long jumpers Jeswin Aldrin and Muhammed Anees Yahiya have given the meet a miss. Anees' brother Muhammed Anas, who ran the 200m in Indian Grand Prix-2, will not be competing here.

But the presence of Amlan Borgohain, in both 100m and 200m, and his showdown with Amiya Kumar Mallick and Maldives' Hassan Saaid will headline the sprint events. In the absence of top quartermilers, V. Muhammed Ajmal, who won Indian Grand Prix-2, looks the favourite to win the 400m.

In the women's section, Hima Das will continue her comeback process in the 200m.Though the field looks thin, Hima, who was disqualified for a foul start in the Grand Prix-2 in Thiruvananthapuram, will be keen to do well here.

In 400m, Jyothika Sri, who won Indian Grand Prix-2, will start as the favourite. V.K. Vismaya and Aishwarya Mishra will be Jyothika's main rivals. Pranjali Dilip Patil and local girl Unnathi Bollanda will renew their rivalry in 110m hurdles,. Pranjali pipped Unnathi in the Grand Prix-2 in Thiruvananthapuram recently.

Indians claim three medals in Astana

WRESTLING

Sports Bureau

Indian Greco Roman wrestlers bagged three medals, including a silver and two bronzes, in the Asian wrestling championships in Astana on Sunday.

Rupin (55kg), who beat Kyrgyzstan's Sardarbek Konushbaev 16-7, Kazakhstan's Amangali Bekbolatov 6-4 and China's Haifeng Zhang 3-1, lost 1-3 to Iranian Poya Dad Marz of Iran in the 55kg final to take the silver medal.

Neeraj (63kg) secured his second consecutive bronze medal. He beat Kyrgyz Dastan Kadyrov 7-6, but lost 0-9 to Iranian Iman Hossein Mohammadi. As the Iranian reached the final, Neeraj made it to a bronze medal match and defeated Korean Jinseub Song 5-2.

Sunil Kumar (87kg), an Asian champion in 2020, got past Tajikistan's Saidislomiddin Aslamov 9-1 before losing 2-7 to Iran's Naser Ghasem Alizadeh in the semifinals. Sunil beat Japan's Masato Sumi 4-1 for a bronze.

KARNATAKA ROUND-UP

Balasubramaniam elected Karnataka State Billiards Association president

S. Balasubramaniam was elected president of the Karnataka State Billiards Association.

The Association's AGM and elections were held on Sunday.

The members:

President: S. Balasubramaniam; **Vice president**: Prakash Kheny; **Secretary**: H.E. Anand; **Jt. Secretary**: B. Bhaskar: **Treasurer**: N. Girish.

Executive Committee Members: Kishore Khurana, M.S. Arun, C.L. Raghunath, K. Bunty, A. Deepak, Sanjay M. Punjabi, Vinod Kumar H. Jain, Nadeem Azeez, Varghese Pallath.

S. Balasubramaniam.

LIVE TELECAST

Chess World championships: FIDE & Chess.com *YouTube* channels, 2.30 p.m. onwards

Super Cup football: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 5 & 8.30 p.m.

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.

LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

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